The Manipulation of Time and the Legitimacy of Power during the American and French Revolutions, 1774-1815

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Declaration

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaborations except as declared in the Declaration and specified in the text. All translations, unless otherwise noted or published in anthologies, are my own.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University of similar institution except as declared in the Declaration and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Declaration and specified in the text.

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the Faculty of History Degree Committee (80,000 words).

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PREFACE

This thesis begins with a simple coincidence. On 12 December 1799, George Washington rode out across his Virginian plantation. Despite the harshening winter weather, which had blanketed Mount Vernon in snow, he persevered with his tour, returning several hours later with sleet "hanging upon his hair." On 13 December, he complained about "a hoarseness" in his throat that seemed to "increase with the evening." By the following morning, Washington was bedbound, gulping for breath, and convinced that his condition was "mortal."[1] Several hours earlier, on 23 frimaire Year VIII, the latest French Revolutionary regime – the Directory – was finally declared defunct. Barely a month since the coup of 18 Brumaire, a new constitution had already been devised, concentrating executive authority in a First Consul: Napoleon Bonaparte. Had news travelled faster, of course, the ailing American president might have been made aware of this event.[2] Instead, Washington spent his last night alive idly scanning a newspaper that made no mention of either the new constitution or the recent coup. Despite their separate time systems, these events were separated by mere hours. On the morning of 13 December 1799, Napoleon was made First Consul of France; by the evening of 14 December 1799, Washington was dead. The rise and demise of the two most prominent protagonists in the two greatest revolutionary convulsions of the eighteenth-century occurred almost simultaneously.

This thesis was *supposed* to begin with a simple comparison.[3] It is perhaps this solitary micro-moment of overlap that has discouraged historians from investigating the parallels between George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte.[4] Their interaction was minimal: there are no letters, of course, and their careers, both military and civil, are barely

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[1] Tobias Lear, *Letters and Recollections of George Washington, Being letters to Tobias Lear and others between 1790 and 1799, showing the First American in the management of his estate and domestic affairs. With a diary of Washington's last days, kept by Mr. Lear* (London, Doubleday, Page & Company, 1906), pp.129-30.

[2] It was not until mid-February 1800 that news of the coup arrived in America: "We see by the late papers that a new scene is presented on the French Theatre," observed James Madison, "[and] melancholy evidence appears that the destiny of the Revolution is transferred from the civil to the military authority": James Madison to Thomas Jefferson (14 February, 1800), in David B. Mattern, J. C. A. Stagg, Jeanne K. Cross, Susan Holbrook, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*. Congressional Series (17. vols., Charlottesville, VA., University Press of Virginia, 1991), XVII, pp.363.

[3] Until recently, the only parallel study of Washington and Napoleon was a twelve page "fragment" of a larger article entitled, 'Was Napoleon a Dictator?' by the Prussian-born political theorist, Franz Lieber. Predictably, its conclusions are equal parts hagiographic and condemnatory: "Washington was modest, Napoleon came to ruin by untameable pride"; "Washington obeyed the law, Napoleon constantly broke the law when it appeared necessary to him," etc: Franz Lieber, 'Washington and Napoleon: A fragment' (New York, NY., 1864), p.4. Only two hundred copies were ever printed, for the Metropolitan Fair of New York.

[4] There were sporadic comparisons made during the mid-nineteenth century, none of which offer a reinterpretation the standard hero and villain thesis: Henry Brougham, 'Napoleon and Washington, from Lord Brougham's Article in the Edinburgh Review,' *Atkinson's Saturday Evening Post* (23 March, 1839); William Warren offers a comparison of Washington and Napoleon in *The Rover: A Weekly Magazine of Tales, Poetry, and Engravings, Also Sketches of Travel, History…* (2 October, 1844), p.93; James K. Paulding, 'Washington and Napoleon,' *The New World; a Weekly Family Journal of Popular Literature, Science, Art and News* (27 July, 1844).

contemporaneous. Indeed, Washington was scarcely aware of General Bonaparte's existence.[5] My intention was therefore to rectify the biographical blank; and yet, I could not escape this coincidence in time.[6] The strangeness of this simultaneity, however, may only have been apparent to me: after all, there were no formal time zones or meridian lines, no high-speed circulating media criss-crossing the late-eighteenth century Atlantic – the time at Mount Vernon in Virginia bore little reference to the time at the Luxembourg Palace in Paris.[7] If these events could occur outside any form of chronometric correspondence, and their coincidence could pass without any apparent commentary, perhaps the experience of time diverged too: in fact, there may have been more than a difference between *the* time at Washington's deathbed and Napoleon's inauguration; time *itself* may have been different.

There are, then, two further figures who have influenced this thesis: Reinhart Koselleck and Mona Ozouf. For Koselleck, the end of the eighteenth century ushered in the "temporalisation" of historical experience.[8] By devising the interactive ontological spheres of the "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation," he argued that the previously static structure of past, present and future became sensitised to different tempos of change.[9] Writing this type of history – "time history," in effect – becomes illuminating with practical application. Whilst Koselleck relied upon anecdotal and theoretical abstraction, the creativity and empirical force of Mona Ozouf's work – her study on the "spacetime" of the *fêtes révolutionnaires*, for example, appeared in 1976 – demonstrates how time, an often intangible concept, can be applied as an analytic tool *without* losing sense of the historical narrative.[10]

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[5] In his entire collection of papers there are only two passing references made to Bonaparte, both by the marquis de Lafayette in letters outlining contemporary military manoeuvres in Europe: Lafayette to George Washington on 20-21 August, 1798, and 5 September, 1798, in W. W. Abbot, *The Papers of George Washington.* Retirement Series (4 vols., Charlottesville, VA., University Press of Virginia, 1998), II, p.540-41, and II, pp.586-87.

[6] The blank no longer exists; the first, full-length contemporary study of Washington and Napoleon appeared in 2012: Matthew J. Flynn and Stephen E. Griffin, *Washington and Napoleon: Leadership in the Age of Enlightenment* (Washington, DC., Potomac Books, 2012). Flynn and Griffin seek to emphasize the potential interchangeability of Washington and Napoleon, portraying both as products of their respective revolutions; thus, as Napoleon is supposed to have told Las Cases, his amanuensis in exile, on St. Helena: "he would have been a Washington had he been in Washington's place, and that Washington himself would have been a Napoleon had he lived in France": p.xii.

[7] Vanessa Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time: 1870-1950* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2015), esp. ch.3; Simon Schaffer, 'Chronometers, charts, charisma: on histories of longitude,' *Science Museum Group Journal* 2 (Autumn 2014): http://dx.doi.org/10.15180/140203 [accessed: 20/09/2016]; William B. Warner, *Protocols of Liberty: Communication Innovation and the American Revolution* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2013), p.148.

[8] Reinhart Koselleck, 'Modernity and the Planes of Historicity,' in *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (trans. Keith Tribe), (New York, NY., Columbia University Press, 2004), pp.9-25.

[9] "Our ancestors stuck to the lessons they received in their youth; but we have to relearn things every five years," lamented Goethe: Koselleck, 'Time and History,' in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (trans. Todd Samuel Presner), (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 2002), pp.100-114 here: p.113.

[10] Mona Ozouf, *La fête révolutionnaire (1789-1799)* (Paris, Gallimard, 1976), republished in, Mona Ozouf, *De Révolution en République: les chemins de la France* (Paris, Gallimard, 2015), pp.337-615, on festive "spacetime" in particular, see: pp.456-527; Ozouf has woven throughout her entire *œuvre* a sensitivity to the peculiar temporal experiences of the French Revolution, see: 'La Révolution française et l'homme régénéré,' 'La Révolution française et l'aléatoire: l'exemple de Varennes,' and 'La Révolution française au tribunal de l'utopie,' in *L'Homme Régénéré: Essais sur la Révolution française* (Paris, Gallimard, 1989), pp.116-57, 67-92, 211-39.

"Revolutionizing time": this was the central ambition of the revolutionary generation.[11] My ambition is to demonstrate how time – in particular, the perception of time – governed the political actions of contemporary actors. There is, moreover, an inbuilt originality to this thesis, since in the very few studies of temporality and the American Revolution – never mind its interaction with French Revolutionary temporalities – Koselleck's fingerprint is barely detectable.[12]

This thesis is therefore about time and power. It is not a study in biography; nor can it be a study of every aspect of life and time in North American and France during the late-eighteenth century. Significant areas, such as confessional belief or military tactics, have, by necessity, received less attention than a more extensive study might afford. The parallel between Washington and Napoleon, which was its accidental inspiration, does not disappear: it has simply become its culminating argument. I contend that the legitimacy of their authority is incomprehensible without reference to the way in which the revolutionary disruption in the lived experience of time degraded the exercise of political power – and thus how regulating the former resuscitated the latter. A dissertation of this length, and a topic of this scale, cannot be exhaustive: instead, it is telescopic, scanning the historical horizon of the revolutionary era, from the Boston Tea Party in 1773 to the Battle of Leipzig in 1813, occasionally zooming in upon moments of intersect, where contemporary considerations of temporality underpinned (and often undermined) the exercise of political authority.

[11] Mona Ozouf, 'Passé, Présent, Avenir: À travers les textes administratifs de l'époque révolutionnaire,' in *L'École de la France* (Paris, Gallimard, 1984), pp.55-73, here: p.55: "Révolutionner le temps: telle a été l'ambition des hommes de la Révolution française."

[12] Koselleck is entirely absent, for example, from, Michael Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1988), and Greg Weiner, *Madison's Metronome: The Constitution, Majority Rule, and the Tempo of American Politics* (Lawrence, KS., University Press of Kansas, 2012): it is possible that this absence may be legitimately explained; my point is that Koselleck's approach, in particular his dual analytic categories of the "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation," has seldom been instrumentalised in the historiography of the American Revolution.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores perceptions of time and history during the American and French Revolutions, 1774-1815. During this period – before the dissemination of the publications of Kant or Hegel – the primary "theorists" of time and temporality were practical figures: journalists, soldiers, chancers, adventurers. Their perception of time was derived almost entirely from real-world reflection, from lived experience, from having participated in the historical events themselves – not from libraries or treatises; their conclusions were not the product of incomprehensible philosophical wanderings. Time was tangible, palpable – it was central to the ways in which people did politics and how they made decisions. I aim to reconstruct this experience of time from a practical, not a philosophical vantage point: to ask whether historical events reflect the historical theory, whether the former validates the latter. In short, I aim to inject context into the work of Reinhart Koselleck, who largely depended upon anecdotal abstractions and disjointed narratives to illustrate his theoretical disquisitions.[13] What follows is, in effect, a practical history of time during the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries.

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In December 1798, the *Greenfield Gazette*, a Massachusetts periodical, counselled its readers against drawing idle comparisons between the American and French Revolutions.[14] Citing the Connecticut poet and Francophile, Joel Barlow, who was made a French citizen in 1792 and later supported the decapitation of Louis XVI, the *Gazette* drew a clear contrast between the *temporality* of American and French revolutionary societies.[15] America was now peopled by "patriots" who, in the course of "the time which tried men's souls," had reached "the full strength and vigor of their faculties." Barlow "ought to remember, that in our national legislature and executive, there is age and experience" – a constancy of characters in contrast to the mere "sub-successors" who formed "the present directors" of the French Republic, and

[13] The essential texts, which are acknowledged throughout this thesis, are: Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures Past: On the Semantics of Historical Time* (trans. Keith Tribe), (New York, NY., Columbia University Press, 2004); the essays included in, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (trans. Todd Samuel Presner), (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 2002); *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA., MIT Press, 1988); 'Is There an Acceleration of History?' in Hartmut Rosa and William E. Scheuerman, eds., *High-Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, and Modernity* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University, 2009), pp.113-134; see, also: David Carr, 'Review: Futures Past,' *History and Theory* 26 (1, 1987), pp.197-204.

[14] *The Greenfield Gazette* (Greenfield, MA., 10 December, 1798), Volume VII, Issue 359, pp.1-2; see: Jeffrey A. Smith, *Printers and Press Freedom: The Ideology of Early American Journalism* (Oxford, OUP, 1988).

[15] Richard Buel Jr., *Joel Barlow: American Citizen in a Revolutionary World* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), pp.215-236; Annie Jourdan, 'A Tale of Three Patriots in a Revolutionary World: Théophile Cazenove, Jacques-Pierre Brissot, Joel Barlow (1788-1811),' *Early American Studies* 10 (2, Spring 2012), pp.360-81.

whose predecessors had "been all long since swept away by the guillotine." This rebuke coincided with the disintegration of Franco-American relations.[16] As the French Revolution had radicalised, fraternity degenerated into antipathy: in 1793 the Genêt mission threatened to import the popular spontaneity of Jacobin democracy, and undermine the basis of American constitutionalism; in 1795, the consternation occasioned by the Jay Treaty, which orientated American diplomatic and commercial interests towards Britain, demonstrated the extent to which the controversies of the French Revolution had infested partisan tensions in America; by 1798, France and the United States were all but at war – the so-called Quasi-War – along the Atlantic seaboard.[17]

By paraphrasing the mantra of Thomas Paine's revolutionary pamphlet, *The American Crisis*, published during the harsh winter of 1776, the *Gazette* depicted the American Revolution – the "time" that had "tried men's souls" – as a period of maturation, as a progressive, uninterrupted accumulation of "age and experience."[18] In America, the tutelage of revolution had imbued new national institutions with "strength and vigor." In France, by contrast, the transmission of experience had been sequestered by the guillotine, robbing an entire generation of the capacity to act "as a mentor to future successors." Indeed, during the 'XYZ' Affair, in which French diplomats had demanded bribes from their American counterparts before engaging in peace negotiations, Talleyrand – never far from the stench of corruption – admitted that he could grant only secret, informal audiences with United States commissioners because, following the Directorial coup of 18 Fructidor, the government remained unsteadily established, having undergone yet another "succession."[19] The perennial interruptions of French political life – unlike the patriotic practice of American politics, "whose worth has been long since known" – created the impression of temporal abbreviation.[20] As the *Gazette* observed: "Political *successions* do not hasten on with such rapidity as in France, since we have no *poignards* or *guillotines* to accelerate their course."

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[16] On the changing nature of domestic American opinion concerning the French Revolution, see: Charles Downer Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins Press, 1897), pp.139-277.

[17] Harry Ammon, 'The Genet Mission and the Development of American Political Parties,' *Journal of American History* 52 (March 1966), pp.725-41; Todd Estes, *The Jay Treaty Debate, Public Opinion, and the Evolution of Early American Political Culture* (Amherst, MA., University of Massachusetts Press, 2006), pp.33-68; Alexander DeConde, *Entangling Alliance: Politics & Diplomacy Under George Washington* (Durham, NC., Duke University Press, 1958), and *The Quasi-War: the Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1797-1801* (New York, NY., Charles Scribner, 1966); Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, 'Private Letters and Public Diplomacy: The Adams Network and the Quasi-War, 1797-1798,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (2, Summer 2011), pp.283-311.

[18] Thomas Paine, 'The American Crisis, I' (1776), in Mark Philp, ed., *Thomas Paine: Rights of Man, Common Sense, and Other Political Writings* (Oxford, OUP, 2008), pp.61-70, p.61.

[19] Stanley Elkins, Eric McKitrick, *The Age of Federalism: The Early American Republic, 1788-1800* (Oxford, OUP, 1993), see: pp.561-67; Matthew Rainbow Hale, '"Many Who Wandered in Darkness": The Contest over American National Identity, 1795-1798,' *Early American Studies* 1 (1, Spring 2003), pp.127-75; Thomas M. Ray, '"Not One Cent for Tribute": The Public Addresses and American Popular Reaction to the XYZ Affair, 1798-1799,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 3 (4, Winter 1983), pp.389-412; Stephen John Hartness, Jennifer Rose Mercieca, '"Has Your Courage Rusted?": National Security and the Contested Rhetorical Norms of Republicanism in Post-Revolutionary America, 1798-1801,' *Rhetoric and Public Affairs* 9 (1, Spring 2006), pp.79-112.

[20] On revolutionary temporal "abbreviations," see: Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.5, 22, 50.

This betrays the central methodological problem of evaluating a modality of time that, in historical context, existed outside the measurement of mere clock-time. To observe how events "hasten on" or move with "rapidity" is to stress a perceived or experiential shift in the dynamics of historical time; to cite the operations of the guillotine or the rate of assassination as event "accelerators" suggests that the pace of political "*successions*" cannot be recorded by simple reference to the clock or calendar. Indeed, it is to perceive a general divergence between history and time. A common facet of the revolutionary discourse on time was the way in which contemporaries expressed their appreciation of temporality by invoking clock and calendrical metrics as a means of demonstrating their uselessness. The speed and scale of transformative events, writes Peter Fritzsche, overhauled "previously authoritative structures of temporality by redrawing the horizon of historical possibility."[21] Years, months, days, hours, minutes: all degraded as meaningful units of time under the history-bending pressures of revolution.[22]

All of which underscores the challenge of writing "time history."[23] Indeed, no such defined discipline exists, although studies seeking to excavate the sensation, or lived experience, of temporal and historical change have recently proliferated.[24] Even the nomenclature here can be confusing, since it elides the two properties – time and history – that historians often accept as invariable and which are here under investigation. If history has its own time – if, as Reinhart Koselleck argued, there emerged a form of historical time during the late-eighteenth century, in which "different layers of the tempos of change" came

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[21] Peter Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present: Modern Time and the Melancholy of History* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2004), p.18.

[22] As Henry Brougham observed of Mirabeau in his *Historical Sketches of Statesmen who flourished in the time of George III, to which is added Remarks on Party, and an Appendix* (Paris, A. and W. Galignani, 1839), p.360: "he lived in times when each week staggered under the load of events that had formerly made centuries to bend." Hannah Spahn further observes that it was the "late Enlightenment sense of a discrepancy between a rational and a sentimental time perception" that resided at "the root of the collective experience of an 'acceleration' of time": *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, p.74.

[23] The following thesis might be termed "time history," or "chronohistory," although this appears tautological; it is useful in the context of this dissertation on time and power to refer to some of the defining properties of "chronopolitics," which George W. Wallis defines as "a term descriptive of the relation of time-perspectives to political decision-making," in 'Chronopolitics: The Impact of Time Perspectives on the Dynamics of Change,' *Social Forces* 49 (1, September 1970), pp.102-08, here: p.102; see, also: Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and the Avant-garde* (London, Verso, 1995); I. Klinke, 'Chronopolitics: A Conceptual Matrix,' *Progress in Human Geography* 37 (2012), pp.673-90; on the contemporary importance of chronopolitically-conditioned deliberative processes, see: R. Stahl, 'A Clock War: Rhetorics of Time in a Time of Terror,' *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 94 (2008), pp.73-99.

[24] For the best analysis of the origins and operations of the Revolutionary Calendar, see: Sanja Perovic, *The Calendar in Revolutionary France: Perceptions of Time in Literature, Culture, Politics* (Cambridge, CUP, 2012), pp.179-181; on the considerations of historical time central to the formulation of the Constitution of Year III, see: Andrew Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2008), pp.26-61; on time and the post-revolutionary problem of American slavery, see: William W. Freehling, 'The Louisiana Purchase and the Coming of the Civil War,' in Sanford Levinson and Bartholomew H. Sparrow, eds., *The Louisiana Purchase and American Expansion, 1803-1898* (New York, NY., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), pp.69-82; on the construction of the United States Constitution and the politics of time, see: Michael Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of American Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1988), pp.63-81; Greg Weiner, *Madison's Metronome: The constitution, majority rule, and the tempo of American politics* (Lawrence, KS., University Press of Kansas, 2012), pp.ix-xi.

to characterise the human historical experience, – then time also has its own history.[25] For Koselleck, this shift heralded the advent of "modernity." "What is taking place is a temporalisation of history, leading to the special kind of acceleration that characterises our modern world." This shift defined the *Sattelzeit*, a change epoch in human history, which Koselleck approximately dated 1750 to 1850.[26] In order to better explain this process, Koselleck developed a set of twin ontological categories: the "space of experience" (*Erfahrungrsraum*) and the "horizon of expectation" (*Erwartungshorizont*). They moved in lock-step: the former, which classified the past as a warehouse of traditions, habits, *experiences*, guided the latter, the future, as a slowly approaching "horizon" – knowable, predictable. This lessened any sense of transition between past to future, which made the present appear stable. But during the *Sattelzeit*, a radical and dynamicized asymmetry emerged between these categories: they ceased to look similar. Experience – or historical knowledge – no longer provided a foundation upon which to base future expectations. Thus "modernity," as an historical epoch, witnessed the discontinuity of "the past" (experienced as tradition) and "the future" (now an unpredictable arena of human activity). This activated a sense of "temporalisation" because historically epochal events could, in the course of a few hours, appear to affect enormous rupture between past and future, in turn destabilising the experience of the present.

The critiques of Koselleck's thesis are manifold.[27] And yet these twin categories of the "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" have proved remarkably useful – either as a theoretical support or theoretical straw-man – for historians interested in accessing past perceptions of time.[28] This thesis seeks to practically apply Koselleck's models and his vocabulary – the "semantics" of historical time – to revolutionary events. More than merely glossing the aphoristic observations of select philosophers, it seeks to understand how temporal perceptions impacted upon or determined decision-making. In that sense, it as much about real-time as historical time: considerations of temporality were central to the way in which revolutionary events unfolded.

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[25] Koselleck, 'Modernity and the Planes of Historicity,' in *Futures Past*, pp.9-25.
[26] Koselleck, 'Einleitung,' in Otto Brunner, Wenrer Conze, Reinhart Koselleck, eds., *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 1972), Vol. I, p.xiii-xxiii.
[27] John Zammito, 'Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History,' *History and Theory* 43 (2004), pp.124-35; Peter Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde* (London, Verso, 2011); Kathleen Davis, *Periodization & Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism & Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008); and for the defence (and nuance of *Neuzeit*), see: Helge Jordheim, 'Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities,' *History and Theory* 51 (2012), 151-171.
[28] See, for example, Aleida Assmann, *Erinnerungsräume: Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses* (Munich, C. H. Beck, 1999); Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York, NY., Basic Books, 2001); and Andreas Huyssen, *Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 2003).

This nevertheless betrays a methodological problem: there is no fixed set of "time" sources, as there might be state papers for the diplomatic historian, or etiquette handbooks for the cultural historian. As such, past perceptions of time must be assessed under erasure: they are only readable in a secondary – a barely legible – frame of reference, almost as if they are hidden beneath the words themselves. This is because contemporaries allude to, but seldom explicitly identify, the operations of time. The time historian, then, must search everywhere for temporal reflections: as the *Greenfield Gazette* illustrates, even in the materiality of revolution, amidst the "*poignards* or *guillotines*" of Paris, the artefacts – the stuff – used to "accelerate" the "course" of political "*successions*." This thesis, which is grounded in primary and archival material, trawls egodocuments – diaries, memoirs, letters – to assess subjective experiences of time, before attempting to reconstruct broader, collective experiences of time by calibrating these individual reflections with the observations of publicly produced documentation – legislative records, newspapers, journals, police reports. It is concerned primarily with political time – that is, with the temporal reflections that most prominently impacted upon the practice of politics.

This thesis interrogates – as far as possible – the precise meaning and intent of the primary protagonists' writings and declarations. To denounce contemporary observations as mere rhetoric would be to reduce the linguistic expression of the revolutionaries themselves to the position of ephemera.[29] The ways in which they wrote and deliberated also communicated the ways in which they felt, the ways in which they experienced the new and unanticipated. This was, after all, an epoch in which exhortative rhetoric conditioned political activity. "When speech transforms the communications system," writes John Pocock, "the utterance becomes a 'happening' in its own right."[30] For François Furet, the force of revolutionary rhetoric underwrote political competition: "speech substitutes itself for power," meaning that "the semiotic circuit is the absolute master of politics."[31] Lynn Hunt agrees: "Language became an expression of power," testifying to the sense of political rupture, and to the consequent competition for authority. "The inordinate importance of language in the Revolution was a sign of how untracked French society had become."[32]

The same is so for the American Revolution. Where possible this thesis outlines the divergent time temperaments of different groups by analysing their deployment of political language: for example, the discussion in chapter 2 regarding the different temporalities

[29] On revolutionary 'ephemera' and its temporality, see: Richard Taws, *The Politics of the Provisional: Art and Ephemera in Revolutionary France* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), pp.119-142.
[30] J.G.A. Pocock, 'On the Non-Revolutionary Character of Pradigms: A Self-Criticism and Afterpiece,' in *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (London, Methuen & Co, 1972), pp.273-91, here: p.280.
[31] François Furet, *Penser la Révolution française* (Paris, Gallimard, 1978), pp.72-3.
[32] Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1984), p.23.

experienced by the delegates to the Continental Congress and the 'outside' committees of correspondence – sometimes labelled 'the mob,' or more specifically, 'the Mobility,' a term possessed of obvious temporal qualities. In any case, descriptive language was not only a means of reflecting upon historical events; it also came to condition the ways in which historical events were understood and rationalised. It was a way of making sense of a shifting world.[33] "Historical events are not possible without linguistic activity," writes Koselleck: "the experience gained from these events cannot be communicated except through language." After all, how else could a *perception* of a *subjective* experience of historical time be expressed?

Excavating the lived experience of time – what Hannah Spahn has elsewhere termed "sentimental time," in order to distinguish it from absolute or clock-time – necessitates a privileging of its sensory appreciation.[34] As such, each chapter broadly addresses a different emotional regime – from boredom and delirium to patience and anxiety – each of which evoke the sensory peculiarities of different and distinct temporalities. This allows the discussion to include, but also to move beyond temporal and historical velocities – the fixation with acceleration, the study of "the change in the pace of change," that has largely dominated the historiography of modern time regimes.[35] This period, after all, constitutes a *transition* towards modernity; this thesis investigates temporal perceptions *in flux*: the "behaviour" of time therefore conforms to neither early modern nor modern patterns – it is revolutionary time. This thesis evaluates the changes in temporality as the processes of global standardisation and synchronicity were taking effect, but before E.P. Thompson's modern industrial-capitalist clock-time had displaced the primacy of the collective perceptions of time that underscored pre-modern economic, commercial and political regimes.[36] Instead, extricating the "sentimental" responses to contemporary events illuminates the textures – the tones, lacunae, perforations – of temporal experience, more than merely their dynamics. It reveals the way in which time can feel "empty" or "heavy," "liquid" or "solid," as well as

[33] Peter Gay, 'Rhetoric and Politics in the French Revolution,' The American Historical Review 66 (No. 3, April, 1961), pp.664-676; see Ann Rigney, The Rhetoric of Historical Interpretation: Three Narrative Histories of the French Revolution (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.63-70.
[34] Hannah Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2011), pp.73-106, see: p.74: "Sentimental time was," Spahn writes, "the time of human perceptions, feelings and actions, a time structured by the aesthetic experience of irretrievable moments rather than by the predictive aims of the natural sciences," and, as such, "time perception was at the root of the collective experience of an 'acceleration' of time," which, for Jefferson, "became relevant…in both his personal life and his historical experience."
[35] Aleida Assmann, 'Transformation of the Modern Time Regime,' in Chris Lorenz and Berber Beverange, eds., *Breaking Up Time: Negotiating the Borders between Present, Past, and Future* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013), pp.39-56, here: p.50; Lynn Hunt, 'Modernity: Are Modern Times Different?' *Historia Critica* 54 (264, September-December 2014), pp.107-24.
[36] E. P. Thompson, 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism,' *Past & Present* 38 (1, 1967), pp.56-97; on the industrial and technological transformations of time during the nineteenth century: Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: The Industrialisation and Perception of Time and Space in the 19th Century* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1986).

"fast" or "slow."[37] This thesis therefore instrumentalises the history of emotions, not in an attempt to trace the cultural contours of dominant emotional regimes, but as a means of teasing out the temporal perceptions inscribed into contemporary emotional responses to political events.

This thesis examines the manipulation of temporal perceptions as the means of establishing political hegemony and legitimacy.[38] Time as a category of historical investigation has gathered significant and wide-ranging attention, yet temporal perception as a conceptual or analytical category has seldom been put to use: it has rarely been deployed in order to explain extraneous phenomenon. The purpose of the present thesis is to employ time as a tool with which to explain revolutionary decision-making, to better understand the exercise of revolutionary power.

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Exclusivist historiographies, which restrained the American and French Revolutions to their national, 'natural' boundaries, have long since been challenged. In the works of R. R. Palmer and Jacques Godechot, for example, the observation of political and intellectual commonalities contributed to the creation a revolutionary "era," a meta-venue of revolutionary history – what became the late-eighteenth century Atlantic world – that flourished as social interpretations of the French Revolution faded.[39] As the context of

[37] On the emotional regimes of the French Revolution, see: William M. Reddy, *The Navigation of Feeling: A Framework for the History of Emotions* (Cambridge, CUP, 2001), pp.173-210; Barry M. Shapiro, *Traumatic Politics: The Deputies and the King in the Early French Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009); on emotion and the American Revolution, see: Peter Charles Hoffer, *Sensory Worlds in Early America* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), pp.189-251; Sarah Pearsall, '"The Power of Feeling?" Emotion, Sensibility, and the American Revolution,' *Modern Intellectual History* 8 (3, November 2011), pp.659-72, who observes that emotional typologies of American history have seldom focused on "high politics," and tended to deal more with "the domestic, the feminine, and the literary" aspects of the Revolution; see, also: Sarah Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2009); and Nicole Eustace, *Passion Is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2008); Marshall Smelser, 'The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion,' *American Quarterly* 10 (4, 1958), p.391-419*;* more generally, see: Jan Plamper, *The History of Emotions: An Introduction* (Oxford, OUP, 2015), pp.1-39; Ute Frevert, *Emotions in History – Lost and Found* (Budapest, Central European University Press, 2011), pp.3-18.

[38] This thesis does not attempt to offer a new reading of clock or calendrical reform during this period, which has already been exhaustively examined; see: Gerhard Dorhn-van Rossum, *History of the Hour: Clocks and Modern Temporal Orders* (trans. T. Dunlap) (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1996); David Landes, *Revolution in Time: Clock and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000); in a specifically American context, see: M. O'Malley, *Keeping Watch: A History of American Time* (Washington, DC., Smithsonian, 1990); it likewise moves away from the typically cited "time"-specific sources, such as the National Convention debates on the Republican Calendar: Marie-Hélène Froeschle-Chopard, Michel Froeschle-Chopard, 'Le Calendrier Républicain, une nécessité idéologique et/ou scientifique?' in Philippe Joutard, dir., *L'Espace et le Temps Reconstruits: La Révolution française, une Révolution des mentalités et des cultures? Actes du colloque organisé à Marseille par la Commission Scientifique régionale pour le Bicentenaire de la Révolution française* (Aix-en-Provence, Université de Provence, 1990), pp.169-79.

[39] R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution* (2 vols., 1959-64); and, Jacques Godechot, *France and the Atlantic Revolution of the Eighteenth Century, 1770-1799* (trans. Herbert H. Rowen), (New York, NY., The Free Press, 1965), which resembles a parallel history that largely confines its comparative force to moments of intersect between the various "Atlantic" revolutions; see, also: Patrice Higonnet, *Sister Republics: The Origins of French*

revolutionary political historiography globalised, however, cultural approaches were localised in response to the post-colonial weakening of universalised analyses.[40] The reflexivity brought to bear upon the intellectual intersections of the Revolutions was thus accompanied by a simultaneously fragmentation of cultural knowledge, which served to estrange the Revolutions and to suggest that their political cultures were essentially irreconcilable. As David Andress has recently stated, however, the "closed-border national evaluations of revolutionary situations amidst a group of states that all had complex transatlantic and interregional ties and exchanges are and must be inadequate."[41] Despite their chronological proximity, there remains no single study that comprehensively approaches the transformations in the perception of time and history affected by the American and French Revolutions. This thesis re-examines one of the central political problems that these Revolutions exposed, then confronted, and later bequeathed to historians – namely, the question of legitimacy: its disintegration, re-articulation, and instability. It does so with the tool of time, which privileges a diversity of epistemological models – financial, visual, emotional, administrative, military histories, amongst others, all help to inform an often intangible object of analysis: temporal perceptions.[42]

This thesis is therefore not a comparative history or transfer history, both of which typically offer a framework of analysis for terms and phenomena that cohere chronologically or share a specified geography, such as a sea.[43] It is better understood as an intersecting or

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and American Republicanism (Cambridge MA., Harvard University Press, 1988); James H. Hutson, *The Sister Republics: Switzerland and the United States from 1776 to the Present* (Washington DC., Library of Congress, 1991).

[40] Stefan Helgesson, 'Radicalizing Temporal Difference: Anthropology, Postcolonial Theory, and Literary Time,' *History and Theory* 53 (2014), pp.545-62; on extra-European revolutions and temporal shifts, see: Andrus Ers, 'Year Zero: The temporality of revolution studied through the example of the Khmer Rouge,' in Hans Ruin, Andrus Ers, eds., *Rethinking Time: History, Memory and Representation* (Södertörn, Philosophical Studies, 9, 2011), pp.155-65.

[41] David Andress, 'Atlantic Entanglements: Comparing the French and American Revolutions,' in Alan Forrest, Matthias Middell, eds., *The Routledge Companion to the French Revolution in World History* (London, Routledge, 2015), pp.159-74, p.159.

[42] On financial, monetary and material time: Philip T. Hoffman, Gilles Postel-Vinay, Jean-Laurent Rosenthal, *Priceless Markets: The Political Economy of Credit in Paris, 1600-1870* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp.156-70; Richard Taws, *The Politics of the Provisional: Art and Ephemera in Revolutionary France* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), pp.119-42; Manuela Albertone, 'Une histoire oubliée: les assignats dans l'historiographie,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 287 (1, 1992), pp.87-104; J. G. A. Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time in Early Eighteenth-Century England,' in J. G. A. Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, Chiefly in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, CUP, 1985), pp.91-102; Jennifer J. Baker, *Securing the Commonwealth: Debt, Speculation and Writing in the Making of Early America* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), pp.63-118; on literature and temporality, see: Lynn Hunt, '"No Longer an Evenly Flowing River": Time, History, and the Novel,' *American Historical Review* 103 (5, December 1998), pp.1517-21; James Noggie, *The Temporality of Taste in Eighteenth-Century British Writing* (Oxford, OUP, 2012), pp.1-39; on military temporalities during the Napoleonic wars, see: Alan Liu, *Wordsworth, The Sense of History* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1989), pp.401-06; Luis Lobo-Guerrero, 'Maritime insurance, the security of credit and the British state at war during the Napoleonic period,' in Luis Lobo-Guerrero, *Insuring War: Sovereignty, Security and Risk* (Oxford, Routledge, 2012), pp.21-56.

[43] David Armitage, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History,' in David Armitage, Michael J. Braddick, eds., *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, Houndsmill, 2002), p.22: "The potential for comparative trans-Atlantic histories along an east-west axis remains largely unexplored."

entangled history, as an historical account that darts, or criss-crosses, back-and-forth through time and space – as *histoire croisée*.[44] The concepts under observation – namely, time and history – are not considered in comparative contexts; they are in some sense interactive, continually shifting. Unlike comparison, *histoire croisée* allows historical events to retain their exceptional qualities, whilst enabling the historian to view those events as iterations of a common, ongoing process. The reflexivity of this methodological approach illuminates the ways in which contemporary constructions of temporal perceptions shifted across multiple time frames. The practical and intellectual moments of analytical intersection rely upon the very commonality of a shifting temporality. I do not intend to simply equate the temporal regimes of revolutionary America and France; but rather, to demonstrate how similar processes of rupture actualised similar responses. In the second chapter, for example, the experience of historical compression and its impact upon the revolutionary deliberative process is examined in two non-contemporaneous, yet conceptually comparable contexts: the Continental Congress, 1774-1776, and the National Assembly, 1789-1791.[45] This can be disorientating: the framework of *histoire croisée*, unlike the oceanic forum of Atlantic history, ceaselessly decentres the object of analysis, relying instead upon the similarity of the constant divergences in the process of generating conceptual meaning.

It is easy to get lost in this meta-clutter. An adequate historicisation of time perspectives both between and across the American and French Revolutions is not possible in a comparative framework. As Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann have observed, the comparative approach can give rise to "conflicts" between a synchronic and diachronic logic of analysis. By valorising the predetermined over the processual, comparative history assumes the existence of a synchronic cross-section – "a pause in the flow of time" – where

[44] As Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann have argued, the "historicization" of entangled concepts "means articulating the essential aspect of reflexivity and the multiple time frames that enter into the construction of an object to the extent that it is envisaged as a production situated in time and space"; consequently, *histoire croisée* "plays a role in this undertaking by opening up lines of inquiry that encourage a rethinking, in historical time, of the relationship among observation, the object of study, and the analytical instruments used": 'Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the challenge of reflexivity,' *History and Theory* 45 (February, 2006), pp.30-50, here: p.45. This is, in part, the methodological approach outlined and used by Philipp Ziesche in his assessment of the American revolutionaries who witnessed and participated in the French Revolution during the late 1780s through to the Napoleonic Empire: *Cosmopolitan Patriots: Americans in Paris in the Age of Revolution* (University of Virginia Press, 2010), see: p.10.

[45] On the Continental Congress, the essential literature includes: Edmund Cody Burnett, *The Continental Congress* (New York, NY., Macmillan, 1941); Lynn Montross, *The Reluctant Rebels: the Story of the Continental Congress: 1774-1789* (New York, NY., Harper and Brothers, 1970); H. James Henderson, *Party Politics in the Continental Congress* (New York, NY., McGraw-Hill, 1974); Jack N. Rakove, *The Beginnings of National Politics: An Interpretive History of the Continental Congress* (New York, NY., Knopf, 1979); on the Estates-General and the National Assembly, see: Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996); the surrounding media of the Estates-General may be found in, Armand Brette, *Recueil de documents relatifs à la convocation des Etats généraux de 1789* (4 vols., Paris, 1894-1915); Henry Heller, *The Bourgeois Revolution in France, 1789-1815* (New York, NY., Berghahn Books, 2006), pp.65-82; Paul R. Hanson, *Contesting the French Revolution* (London, Wiley and Blackwell, 2009), pp.10-34.

the objects of comparison sit fixed, or suspended, and evaluation may take place.[46] *Histoire croisée*, by contrast, allows for the flexibility necessary to investigate "relational configurations" that are active or asymmetrical, to trace the qualitative or experiential dimension of "labile" situations.[47] It is a form of historical analysis that is, like the phenomena it seeks to analyse, mobile. It therefore provides an appropriate methodological framework for a thesis that aims, in effect, at a non-contemporaneous cross-evaluation. It likewise testifies to the contemporary collapse in the intellectual authority of comparison (especially historical comparison), which buckled beneath the sense of historical singularity inherent to revolutionary experience. In February 1775, the *Pennsylvania Evening Post* scanned the historical horizon, observing that the "wheel of politics, in its revolutions, naturally brings about a similarity of circumstances and events happening at distant periods." By invoking a cyclical metaphor – the "wheel" of events – the *Post* could point to a fundamental similitude in the structure of human history, one that would "pass unnoticed" if the colonists failed to glance through the "mirrour of comparison."[48] By June 1776, revolutionary events seemed to move faster than the construction of comparison would allow: America was now "in the very midst of revolution," as John Adams was forced to conclude, perhaps the most "unexpected, and remarkable of any in the history of the world." There was no doubting the historic scale of this revolution: "Objects of the most Stupendous Magnitude, Measures in which the Lives and Liberties of Millions, born & unborn are most essentially interested, are now before Us."[49]

Beyond the non-contemporaneous, however, this thesis works at an additional level of remove: after all, I am not trying to establish chronological similarity between the revolutions, but to assess the similar ways in which fractures emerged in the experience of chronology itself.[50] This thesis therefore moves somewhat beyond *Verflechtungsgeschichte*, or entangled history; it could almost be termed a *Zeitverschmolzenegeschichte*: a time-melted-history, that stretches historical analysis not merely across time – that is, across the non-contemporaneous – but across the interactions of different modalities of time.[51] Articulating

[46] Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison,' p.35; on the methodological challenges of *histoire croisée* in practice, see: Eliga H. Gould, 'Entangled Histories, Entangled Worlds: The English-Speaking Atlantic as a Spanish Periphery,' *American Historical Review* 112 (3, 2007), pp.764-86; Renaud Morieux, *The Channel: England, France and the Construction of a Maritime Border in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, CUP, 2016), pp.1-28.
[47] Werner and Zimmermann, 'Beyond Comparison,' p.38, see also, p.45: "*Histoire croisée* plays a role in this undertaking by opening up lines of inquiry that encourage a rethinking, in historical time, of the relationship among observations, the object of study, and the analytical instruments used."
[48] *The Pennsylvania Evening Post* (Philadelphia, PA., 9 February, 1775), Volume I, Issue 8, p.29.
[49] John Adams to William Cushing (9 June, 1776), in Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789* (25 vols., Washington, DC., Library of Congress, 1976-2000), IV, p.178; on the growing inapplicability of historical exemplar, see Koselleck, '*Historia Magistra Vitae*: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process,' in *Futures Past*, pp.26-42.
[50] Göran Therborn, 'Entangled Modernities,' *European Journal of Social Theory* 6 (3, August, 2003), pp.293-305.
[51] The term 'Zeitverschmolzenegeschichte' is my coinage. Felicitas Becker, 'Netzwerke vs. Gesamtgesellschaft: ein Gegensatz? Anregungen für Verflechtungsgeschichte,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 30 (2, April-June 2004),

the reflexivity of the experiences and perceptions of time and history allows for the free-flow analysis of concepts such as 'revolution' that were themselves in a contemporary state of flux. It also blurs cause and effect: did revolutionary conditions alter historical time, or did an earlier alteration in historical time create revolutionary conditions? The answer is not binary, but interactive, it varies – once again – across time and space.

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In the preface to his translation of Friedrich von Gentz's *The Origin and Principles of the American Revolution. Compared with the Origin and Principles of the French Revolution* (1800), John Quincy Adams attempted to avert cross-contamination "between *right* and *wrong*," between the "plain sense of mankind," which he believed characterised the American cause, and the French Revolution, which, like a "highwayman who murders a traveller," had been an abhorrent, almost criminal enterprise.[52] Gentz had attempted to construct an Atlantic firewall between the revolutions because, as he saw it, the narrative of the American Revolution had been dragged into the vortex of French Revolutionary historical time:

> It may justly be taken for granted, that since the last ten years have almost exhausted all the powers of attention and of memory, the characteristic features of the origin and first progress of that [American] revolution are no longer distinctly present in the minds even of many of its cotemporaries.[53]

It was during the period demarcated by this thesis that the semantic shift in the concept of 'revolution' took place.[54] Previously a transhistorical expression derived from the rhythms of nature, such as planetary or seasonal rotations, it was increasingly employed to describe sudden, irreversible breaks in the otherwise iterative pattern of human life.[55] Between the

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pp.314-24; Marten Düring, Ulrich Eumann, 'Historische Netzwerkforschung: Ein neuer Ansatz in den Geschichtswissenschaften,' *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 39 (3, July-September 2013), pp.369-90; Margrit Pernau, 'Whither Conceptual History? From National to Entangled Histories,' *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 7 (1, Summer 2012), pp.1-11; Juliane Schiel, 'Crossing Paths between East and West. The Use of Counterfactual Thinking for the Concept of 'Entangled Histories,' *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 34 (2, 2009), pp.161-83.

[52] John Quincy Adams, 'Preface,' in Friedrich von Gentz, *The Origin and Principles of the American Revolution, Compared with the Origins and Principles of the French Revolution*, ed. Peter Koslowski (trans. John Quincy Adams), (Indianapolis, IN., Liberty Fund, 2010), pp.3-5, here: p.3.

[53] Gentz, *The Origin and Principles*, p.10; on historicity and periodicity in the French revolutionary press, see: Pierre Rétat, 'Forme et discours d'un journal révolutionnaire: Les *Révolutions de Paris* en 1789,' in Claude Labrosse, Pierre Rétat, Henri Duranton, eds., *L'Instrument Périodique: La fonction de la presse au XVIII^e siècle* (Lyon, 1986), pp.139-78.

[54] My thesis condenses Koselleck's *Sattelzeit* of 1750 to 1850, limiting the field of study to the activity of revolution itself; see: Kari Palonen, 'An Application of Conceptual History to itself: from method to theory in Reinhart Koselleck's Begriffsgeschichte,' *Redescriptions* (*Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought*), 1, pp.39-69.

[55] I. Bernard Cohen, *Revolution in Science* (Cambridge, MA., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1985), pp.51-76; Christopher Hill, 'The Word 'Revolution' in Seventeenth-Century England,' in Richard Ollard, Pamela Tudor-Craig, *For Veronica Wedgewood These: Studies in Seventeenth Century History* (London, Harper Collins, 1986), pp.134-51.

outbreak of the American Revolution and the conclusion of the Napoleonic Wars the dynamics of history were "denaturalized," stripped of their natural limits and freed from quasi-objective spatial metaphors; but history did not yet correspond to the ever-accelerating modality of technological advance.[56] It was instead motored by the newly limitless possibilities of political revolution. As Koselleck explains, in the century spanning 1750 to 1850, revolution becomes "a regulative principle of knowledge" once it begins to coordinate the conditions and possibilities of all political participation: it makes "the revolutionary process, and a consciousness which is both conditioned by it and reciprocally affects it, belong inseparably together."[57] 'Revolution' became the legitimising mechanism of political activity because, having been responsible for overturning legitimate authority, it was now appealed to as its substitute. Simultaneously conceived as a "coefficient of movement" and as the validator of political activity, 'revolution' trapped the conceptualisation of legitimacy within its own impermanence, within the same system of spontaneity and flux that characterised its *ongoing* temporal characteristics. 'Revolution' possessed no "warranty in permanence" – it could not by definition invoke historical precedent as a means of securing its continuity; it demanded historical movement, even destruction, in order to sustain its voracious need for new sources of legitimacy.[58] When it became a source of legitimacy in itself, the very concept of legitimacy degraded. As Dan Edelstein observed, when 'revolution' burst the bounds of constitutionalism in France after 1793, it began providing a vocabulary of legitimate authority in its own right.[59] 'Revolution' became coterminous with rupture; its function was the *delegitimisation* of any claim to political legitimacy that emerged from any source extraneous to the phenomenological reality, the lived experience, of revolution itself – its purpose was to destroy constituted authority, not to sustain it.

This definition of political 'revolution' – and, by implication, this revision of 'legitimate' authority – appears to preclude the American example. According to Keith Michael Baker, it was only after 1789 that the notion of "revolution as fact gave way to a conceptualisation of revolution as ongoing act." *Before* 1789, asserts Baker, "[r]evolutions happened, they were not made," they were understood ex-post-facto, they were completed

[56] Hartmut Rosa, 'Social Acceleration: Ethical and Political Consequences of a Desynchronized High-Speed Society,' and Reinhart Koselleck, 'Is There an Acceleration of History?' in Hartmut Rosa and William E. Scheuerman, eds., *High-Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, and Modernity* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University, 2009), pp.77-112, 113-134; Jeremy Stein, 'Reflections on Time, Time-Space Compression, and Technology in the Nineteenth Century,' in Jon May, Nigel Thrift, *Timespace: Geographies of Temporality* (London, Routledge, 2001), pp.105-32; Kari Palonen, *The Struggle with Time: A conceptual history of 'politics' as an activity* (Berlin, Verlag, 2014), pp.17-18.
[57] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.50.
[58] Ibid, pp.50-51.
[59] See Dan Edelstein's articles, 'From Constitutional to Permanent Revolution: 1649 and 1793,' in Baker and Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, pp.118-130, and 'Do We Want a Revolution Without a Revolution? Reflections on Political Authority,' *French Historical Studies* 35 (Spring 2012), pp.269-89, and 'Revolution in Permanence and the Fall of Popular Sovereignty,' in Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, Stefanos Geroulanos, Nicole Jerr, eds., *The Scaffold of Sovereignty* (New York, NY., Columbia University Press, forthcoming).

occurrences, an always-already finished process.[60] The American Revolution (capitalised by its historians, not its participants) complies with this categorisation.[61] It was only after the French Revolution that the term came to "designate a domain of ongoing struggle, a space of action expanding toward an indefinite political horizon, a moment of rupture constantly extended and energized by the urgency of a new conception of time."[62]

This is untrue. The American experience of revolution had begun to fracture the fact/act dichotomy before a single brick was plundered from the walls of the Bastille. In a letter of 21 May 1775, the Virginian politician Richard Henry Lee wrote that there had "never" been "a more total revolution at any place than at New York." In a semantic sense, the "totality" of this "revolution" did not refer to its relative completion, but its sheer scale. In fact, events continued to proceed in real time: "The Tory's have been obliged to fly, the Province is arming, and the Governor dares not call his prostituted Assembly to receive Ld. Norths foolish plan!"[63] Writing in the present tense, Lee observed how New York society was being upended before his very eyes: the narrative time of this "total revolution" was *now*. Lee's letters from this period, for example, are replete with temporally sensitive phrases – "We just hear that…"; "We have just seen a petition from London…"; "I am so hurried that I scarcely know what I write…" – almost as if the events relative to the Revolution were unfolding faster than his quill could copy them.[64] By May 1779 there had been little let-up: attached to a bundle of congressional papers that he sent to Jefferson, Lee included a letter outlining "the progress of our revolution," a documentary account of ongoing events, which he hoped his recipient might find useful.[65] The Revolution demanded an ongoing engagement; Lee, in particular, viewed its "progress" as if from within the process; not as a passive observer, but as an active participant – as a *revolutionary*.

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[60] Baker, 'Revolutionizing Revolution,' in Baker, Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, p.71.

[61] It was the French Revolution, observes Roger Griffin, that formed the time-bridge to modernity since for contemporaries its American precursor was "still intelligible as an archetypal popular revolt against tyranny with classical precedents": 'Fixing Solutions: Fascist Temporalities as Remedies for Liquid Modernity,' *Journal of Modern European History* 13 (2015), pp.5-23, here: p.11; America did not experience, as Bernard Bailyn writes, any "great social shock," which, in France, obliterated ancient institutions and hierarchies. Whilst loyalists certainly lost property, traditions of land ownership or social hierarchies were not as historically entrenched as in France; revolutionary reverberations were relatively restricted: referenced in Gary B. Nash, 'Sparks from the Altar of '76: International Repercussions and Reconsiderations of the American Revolution,' in David Armitage, Sanjai Subrahmanyam, eds., *The Age of Revolutions in Global Context, c.1760-1840* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), ch.1. These distinctions are discussed in depth in the second chapter of this thesis.

[62] Baker, 'Revolutionizing Revolution,' p.80.

[63] Richard Henry Lee to Francis Lightfoot Lee (21 May, 1775), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, I, p.367.

[64] Lee to Robert Carter (1 July, 1775); Lee to Landon Carter (2 June 1776); Lee to Charles Lee (22 April 1776), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, I, p.569; IV, p.118; III, p.571; on Lee's early involvement in the Revolution see: J. Kent McGaughy, *Richard Henry Lee of Virginia: A Portrait of an American Revolutionary* (Lanham, MD., Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), pp.95-120; on the domestic lives of the revolutionaries, and how the Revolution disrupted that tranquility, in particular the Lees, see: Myron Magnet, *The Founders at Home: The Building of America, 1735-1817* (New York, NY., W. W. Norton & Company, 2014), pp.50-9; Thomas Patrick Chorlton, *The First American Republic, 1774-1789: The First Fourteen American Presidents Before Washington* (Bloomington, IN., AuthorHouse, 2011), pp.401-28.

[65] Lee to Thomas Jefferson (3 May 1779), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XII, p.421.

Yet, as Baker contends, "there were no 'revolutionaries' before the Bastille fell."[66] Tying the terminology of revolution to its peculiar temporality, however, inaugurates an entire generation of pre-Bastille "revolutionaries."[67] Thus in 1780 both James Madison and Benjamin Rush could refer to "the course" and "the present stage of the American Revolution" respectively, characterising it as a continuous historical happening, a process advancing across an uncertain historical horizon towards an open future.[68] It was this uncertainty – the shifting internal measurements, dynamics and immediacy of the Revolution – that imbued the revolutionary process with "its own accelerated conception of time."[69] This was not an exclusively French phenomenon. In his *Abrégé de la révolution de l'Amérique Angloise* (1778), the dramatist and historian Pierre-Ulric du Buisson, recently returned from revolutionary America, referred to its participants as "*coopérateurs*" engaged in "the current revolution [*la révolution actuelle*]."[70] A decade after the Declaration of Independence, Edmund Randolph observed that, "every day dawns with perils for the United States," none of which could be adequately foreseen, so that even "the present moment may terminate in the destruction of Confederate America."[71] He now called upon "those who first kindled the Revolution" to come to its aid. Might the individuals responsible for fomenting the (ongoing) revolutionary drama – "those who first kindled" it, as Randolph labelled them – also be termed 'revolutionaries'? It scarcely seems outrageous or anachronistic to suggest so.[72]

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[66] Baker, 'Revolutionizing Revolution,' p.71; on the political controversies that divided the Revolutions, see: Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, 'Controverses transatlantique: contenus, enjeux et impact international de la *Letter to the abbé Raynal* (1782) de Thomas Paine,' in Cecil Courtney, Jenny Mander, eds., *Raynal's Histoire des deux Indes: colonialism, networks and global exchange* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2015), pp.235-46.

[67] On the circulation of news and iconography relating to the storming of the Bastille in America, see: Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Rolf Reichardt, *The Bastille: A History of a Symbol of Despotism and Freedom* (Durham, NC., Duke University Press, 1997), p.212; Anne C. Loveland, *Emblem of Liberty: The Image of Lafayette in the American Mind* (Baton Rouge, LA., Louisiana State University Press, 1971), pp.133-60.

[68] James Madison to Thomas Jefferson (27 March, 1780), in William T. Hutchinson, William M. E. Rachal, eds., *The Papers of James Madison.* Congressional Series (17 vols., Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1962-91), II, p.5: "Among the various conjunctures of alarm and distress which have arisen in the course of the Revolution, it is with pain I affirm to you sir, that no one can be singled out more truly critical than the present." Benjamin Rush, *The Letters of Benjamin Rush: 1761-1792*, ed., L. H. Butterfield (Philadelphia, PA., American Philosophical Society, 1951), p.260.

[69] Baker, 'Revolutionizing Revolution,' p.96.

[70] Pierre Ulric Du Buisson, *Abrégé de la révolution de l'Amérique Angloise: depuis le commencement de l'année 1774, jusqu'au 1 janvier 1778* (Paris, Cellot & Jombert, 1778), p.1, p.3.

[71] Edmund Randolph to Patrick Henry (6 December 1786), in William Wirt Henry, ed., *Patrick Henry: Life, Correspondence and Speeches* (3 vols., New York, NY., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1891), II, pp.310-11; as late as 1799, the congressman Abraham Baldwin observed how the United States had "still not got beyond the reach and influence" of the "causes peculiar" to its revolutionary origins: cited in Douglas Bradburn, *The Citizenship Revolution: Politics and the Creation of the American Union, 1774-1804* (University of Virginia Press, 2009), p.273.

[72] There remains an inherent contradiction in the modern definition of revolution: for whilst revolutions no longer occur without human volition, the rapidity of their onset – the perceived dynamic of their temporality – also frustrates political premonition; and contradictions such as these found their place in the reflections of the American revolutionaries: in 1774, for example, John Adams could predict that "Our Children may see Revolutions," but that the colonies would continue to "oscilate like a Pendulum," perhaps "for many Years to come," ceaselessly preparing for, but never actually achieving, revolution: John Adams to James Warren (9 April, 1774), in Robert J. Taylor, ed., *The Adams Papers* (16 vols., Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1977–), II, p.84; by 1776, he confessed himself "surprized at the Suddenness" of the "chain of Causes and Effects," which seldom seemed like a linear "chain" at all, which had fomented "this Revolution": John Adams to Abigail Adams (3 July, 1776), in L. H. Butterfield, *The Adams Papers*. Adams Family Correspondence (11 vols., Cambridge,

Even before 1789, then, 'revolution' had already emerged as a conceptual category both deriving from, and giving meaning to, an historically charged concatenation of contemporaneous events. It was understood as act of human-historical agency, existing almost exclusively within a malleable present, and increasingly detached from a relatable past or a foreseeable future. Temporally derived definitions have persisted into the present. Hanan Sabea has characterised the Egyptian Revolution of 2011, for example, as a "time out of time," where the "openness, fluidity and contingency of [the] temporal boundaries of Tahrir Square," created experiences "excised from the every day." Over the course of eighteen days – eighteen *journées*, in effect – ordinary Egyptians were empowered to "reconfigure the political." The third chapter of this thesis examines the time-bending properties of the revolutionary *journée* in French context, locating the suspension of the monarchy on 10 August 1792, in particular, as a site of limitless possibilities, as the supreme political imaginarium of the Revolution, so kairotically charged that the very materials of history were open to refashioning.[73] As a nod to the temporality of modern revolutions, no sooner had Sabea completed her article than it too was overtaken by events: in the summer of 2013, an estimated fourteen million Egyptians swelled the streets of Cairo, exercising their claims to the illimitable popular sovereignty that exists within the "ongoing" revolutionary present, and demanding the overthrow of Mohamed Morsi.[74] During the late-eighteenth century, this conceptual transformation of 'revolution' entangled American and French historical contexts, for whilst this process of conceptual change, as Koselleck and Baker have established, points to simultaneous changes in the perception of historical time, it also makes the "scripts" of the American and French Revolution interactive.[75]

MA., Harvard University Press, 1963-2013), II, p.29; as du Buisson wrote, the "Revolution" had moved with such surprising speed, and taken in so many separate scenes, that its "contemporaries" and "even its *coopérateurs*" could not, "for the most part," profess "any clear or precise idea of those [events] which had prepared it": *Abrégé*, p.430: "la Révolution," p.1: "ses coopérateurs même, n'avoient pour la plûpart, aucune idée nette & précise de ceux qui l'on préparé."

[73] Hanan Sabea, 'A "Time out of Time": Tahrir, the Political and the Imaginary in the context of the January 25th Revolution in Egypt,' Fieldsights – Hot Spots, *Cultural Anthropology Online* (9 May, 2013): https://culanth.org/fieldsights/211 [accessed 26/07/2016]; see, also, Silvana Toska, 'The Multiple Scripts of the Arab Revolutions,' in Baker and Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, pp.325-44.

[74] 'Millions flood Egypt's streets to demand Mursi quit,' *Reuters* (30 June, 2013): http://reut.rs/1aXWXh6 [accessed 26/07/2016]; see: Jillian Schwedler, 'Taking Time Seriously: Temporality and the Arab Uprisings,' Paper delivered at the workshop, 'From Mobilization to Counter-Revolution: The Arab Spring in Comparative Perspective' (3-4 May, 2016): http://pomeps.org/2016/06/10/taking-time-seriously-temporality-and-the-arab-uprisings/ [accessed 26/07/2016]; Doug McAdam, William H. Sewell, Jr., 'It's About Time: Temporality in the Study of Social Movements and Revolutions,' in Ronald R. Aminzade, ed., *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics* (Cambridge, CUP, 2001), pp.89-125; Wendy Pearlman, 'Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings,' *Perspectives on Politics* 11 (2, June 2013), pp.387-409. This conceptualization of popular sovereign participation is discussed in depth in chapters 2 and 4; see: Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Post-Revolutionary America* (Durham, NC., Duke University Press, 2010), pp.1-40; Jürgen Habermas, 'Constitutional Democracy: A Paradoxical Union of Contradictory Principles?' *Political Theory* 29 (6, 2001), pp.766-81; Chris Thornhill, *A Sociology of Transnational Constitutions: Social Foundations of the Post-National Legal Structure* (Cambridge, CUP, 2016), pp.42-44; on Thomas Paine, constituent power and revolutionary trans-Atlanticism, see: Georgina Green, *The Majesty of the People: Popular Sovereignty and the Role of the Writer in the 1790s* (Oxford, OUP, 2014), pp.65-88.

[75] David A. Bell, 'Afterword,' in Baker, Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, pp.345-53.

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This thesis proposes a panoramic analysis of historical time during the era of the American and French Revolutions. It is not – and cannot be – an exhaustive account. There is no detailed dissection here of slave-holding practices in colonial America, for example, or the battlefield strategies of Napoleonic marshals; in terms of sources, this thesis does not embrace the maritime or commercial log-books of trans-Atlantic voyages, for example, nor does it pretend to offer a precise dissection of how the historian may extract time perceptions from source material, not at least beyond the discussion already included in this introduction. If there does seem to be a superabundance of divergent source matter, taken from disparate places and times, then these are only summoned as the impressions of a general *mentalité* – as an attempt to grasp, as broadly as possible, the impact of time on deliberative reasoning, but strictly in its relation to contemporary politics. In this sense, I am *adding* time perceptions as a category of explanatory power to the historian's toolkit, not switching-out others, such as religious or material explanations for political action. I am arguing for the relevancy – not the primacy – of time. But I am also arguing that other explanatory categories may have possessed a significant time dimension. The conceptualisations of crisis were interactive: political, fiscal, social, imperial crises conditioned new perceptions of time just as these new perceptions informed the responses to these crises.

This thesis contends that ruptures in the ways in which time and history were experienced undermined the political legitimacy of constituted authority and repeatedly frustrated its re-assemblage. The chronological construction is fungible. Whilst chapters proceed in a broadly historical sequence, from colonial America and ancien regime France to the period of the Washington Presidency and the Napoleonic Empire, the venues of historical analysis leap backwards and forwards in time, alighting upon conceptual, not contemporaneous, intersections. Chapter 1 contextualises the experience of time culturally and intellectually in colonial America and the court society of pre-revolutionary France, situating "monotony" or "ennui" as constitutive elements of a pre-modern temporal regime.[76] This chapter explains how the time temperament of the French ancien regime inhibited the crown from confronting the twin crises of political authority and financial indebtedness, creating an atmosphere in which they could acquire historic, and ultimately revolutionary, proportions.

[76] Boredom has often been seen as a modern phenomenon, see: Barbara Dalle Pezze, Carlo Salzani, 'The Delicate Monster: Modernity and Boredom,' and Isis I. Leslie, 'From Idleness to Boredom: On the Historical Development of Modern Boredom,' in Barbara Dalle Pezze, Carlo Salzani, ed., *Essays on Boredom and Modernity* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2009), pp.5-34, 35-60; Véronique Léonard-Roques, *Versailles dans la littérature mémoire et imaginaire aux XIX^e et XX^e siècles* (Clermont-Ferrand, Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2005), pp.149-50.

Chapter 2 enters the revolutionary period by demonstrating how novel temporal and historical experiences undermined pre-existing deliberative processes. It juxtaposes two periods: the convocation of the Continental Congress, from the Boston Tea Party in 1773 to the Declaration of Independence in 1776, and the transformation of the Estates-General in the National Assembly from the fall of the Bastille in July, 1789, to the removal of the royal family from Versailles in October.[77] These episodes illustrate how the initial course of these revolutions was determined by the way in which the perceived time pressures operating upon the delegates and deputies to these bodies were invested with immense historical magnitude. Beyond that, this chapter argues that the relative radicalisations of the American and French Revolutions may be attributed to contemporary perceptions of the historicities of the pre-revolutionary regimes: whereas the supposed newness of the American Republic, the lightness of its historical pedigree, enabled – at least in the immediate term – an uncomplicated acceleration of historical and political development, French Revolutionaries repeatedly reached for more extreme solutions to lifting the "drag-weight" of French history that was supposed to be inhibiting revolutionary completion.

Chapter 3 challenges the long-established notion that the idea of the modern revolution reconfigured the architecture of time by affecting a shift from cyclicality to linearity. In fact, the impact of revolution rendered the shape of history hopelessly malleable. During this transitional period, Newtonian assumptions concerning the homogeneity, universality, uniformity, and ultimately the linearity of time were relentlessly undermined.[78] Contemporary discussions of historically significant issues – the construction of constitutions, the eradication of debt, the efficacy of constituent power, even the printing of paper money – became enmeshed in the resulting temporal disarray. This chapter spans the years delineated by the Articles of Confederation and pre-Thermidorean France, roughly 1783-1787 and 1791-1794, and both are characterised as periods of imaginative experimentation with the new fluidity of temporal and historical experience – from literary engagements with time travel, and the prevalence of liquid metaphors in temporal discourse, to the political resonance of popular impatience. Ultimately, it was an inability to "control" historical time that undermined the stable exercise of revolutionary power.

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[77] Calvin Jillson, Rick K. Wilson, *Congressional Dynamics: Structure, Coordination and Choice in the First American Congress, 1774-1789* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1994); Neil Longley York, 'The First Continental Congress and the Problem of American Rights,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 122 (1998), pp.353-83.

[78] Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University, 1957), pp.159-89; Donald J. Wilcox, *The Measure of Times Past: Pre-Newtonian Chronologies and the Rhetoric of Relative Time* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1987), pp.251-58; reflections on temporal change are prevalent in contemporary aesthetic transformation, particularly in music: David B. Greene, *Temporal Processes in Beethoven's Music* (London, Gordon and Breach, 1982), pp.16-19; and: Karol Berger, 'Time's Arrow and the Advent of Musical Modernity,' in Karol Berger, Anthony Newcomb, eds., *Music and the Aesthetics of Modernity: Essays* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2005), p.3-22; Benedict Taylor, *Mendelssohn, Time and Memory: The Romantic Conception of Cyclical Form* (Cambridge, CUP, 2011), p.16-51.

Stability is restored in chapter 4 with the Constitutional Convention of 1787 and the coup of Brumaire in 1799, both of which are framed as quasi-legal efforts to de-temporalise the practice of political legitimacy. The desire to "end the Revolution," a theme that permeates the pronouncements of the protagonists, is depicted as an intervention into political time, as a desire to make revolutionary temporality – and the construction of the future – governable. During the period prior to these interventions, which begin with the conclusion of the Revolutionary War and the end of the Terror, the "temporalisation of history" that Koselleck believed was productive of a perceived historical acceleration, actually resulted in a sensation akin to a continuous historical happening.[79] Progress towards political stability appeared to stall as American and French society, confronted by constitutional breakdown, rural uprisings and economic disintegration, produced an overwhelming sense of contingency and anxiety that appeared, at every moment, to forebode sudden, unseen annihilation. This chapter locates these perceptions as factors that motivated, and were later used to legitimise, both the Convention and the coup.

Chapter 5 concludes with a comparative account of the political and intellectual strategies devised during the post-revolutionary period, under the presidency of George Washington and the Napoleonic Empire. Such juxta-positioning has been almost entirely unexplored. Whilst certain "parallels" have been uncovered by Matthew Flynn and Stephen Griffin, this thesis does not seek to investigate how a dual biography might "serve to humanise both figures" – how, for example, this comparison attenuates the historiographical "acclaim" that surrounds Washington, whilst offering Napoleon a "reprieve."[80] Instead, it seeks to demonstrate how similarities in the experience of the revolutionary rupture of time contributed to similar processes of post-revolutionary temporal reconstruction. I conclude that Washington and Napoleon devised a series of similar political and rhetorical practices that helped establish a common "meantime," during which the accelerative, saturated *time* of political life could be readjusted to the tempo at which newly conceived political institutions accumulated their own legitimising *history*. This, in turn, brought both time and history back into an experiential and dynamic correspondence: whilst it lessened the ceaseless sense of rupture common to revolutionary politics, and enabled the exercise of "legitimate" power, it also underscored the modern interdependence of political legitimacy and historical

[79] Koselleck, 'Historical Time and Social History,' in Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (trans. Todd Samuel Presner, et al), (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 2002) p.115-30; this sense of historical happening is similar to Hartmut Rosa's term "frenetic standstill," which he borrows from Paul Virilio – "interie polaire," see: Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity* (trans. Jonathan Trejo-Mathys), (New York, NY., Columbia University Press, 2015), pp.15, 89, 93. This terminology will nevertheless be used sparingly here since it is largely derived from theoretical approaches to "late-modernity." I prefer to restrict my appraisals of temporality to a contemporary political vocabulary built upon the apparently commonplace sensations of anxiety, fear, and uncertainty for the future.

[80] The only modern parallel of Washington and Napoleon is, Matthew J. Flynn, Stephen E. Griffin, *Washington and Napoleon: Leadership in the Age of Revolution* (Washington DC., Potomac Books, 2012), here: p.181, see: pp.193-98.

temporality. The thesis then draws to a dual conclusion, in both 1803 with the Louisiana Purchase, and in 1813-14 as the Napoleonic Empire disintegrated.

1: The Pre-Revolutionary Time Temperament, 1774-1789

"Not in the last ten centuries," observed the Parisian lawyer, Adrien-Joseph Colson, in the mid-winter of 1789, "has there been such a crisis that, before the end of the year, will either take France to the summit of power and grandeur, or reduce her to utter calamity and destruction."[81] When Louis XVI reluctantly convened the Estates-General in January 1789, he scarcely displayed the same sense of historical hyperconsciousness that so troubled Colson: in fact, when the Third Estate, on 17 June, announced its sovereign metamorphoses into the National Assembly, the king went hunting.[82] This chapter illustrates how pre-revolutionary perceptions of historical time incapacitated the French ancien regime in the face of mounting political and fiscal crises, and how these crises acquired historic proportions when they began to threaten the continued existence of regal legitimacy and authority.[83]

The French crown was afflicted by a habit of "temporisation," an inability – which emerged from its own peculiar temporal and historical consciousness – to meet unfamiliar or unforeseen emergencies with timely responses. The material environment and intellectual atmosphere of the Versailles court and the Parisian salon conditioned this consciousness.[84] The temporality of the regime was premised upon an extreme form of continuity derived from the ceaseless reiteration of tradition, suffusing the late ancien regime with an overwhelming sense of ennui, or boredom. The events of the pre-revolutionary period, starting with the onset

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[81] Adrien-Joseph Colson (17 February, 1789), Chantal Plantier-Sanson, ed., in *Lettres d'un bourgeois de Paris à un ami de province, 1788-1793* (Saint-Cyr-sur-Loire, C. Pirot, 1993), p.27: "Il n'y a pas eu et il n'y aura peut-être pas de plus de dix siècles de crise pareille à celle qui, avant la fin de cette année, va la [France] porter au comble de la puissance et de la grandeur ou la réduire au dernier degré de calamité et d'anéantissement." Colson and other witnesses of the cataclysmic events surrounding the convocation of the Estates-General are detailed by Timothy Tackett, 'Paths to Revolution: The Old Regime Correspondence of Five Future Revolutionaries,' *French Historical Studies* 32 (2009), pp.531-54.

[82] "Yesterday," observed the English traveller, Arthur Young, "while it was actually a question, whether he should be a *doge* of Venice, or a king of France, the king went a hunting!": *Travels during the Years 1787, 1788, & 1789* (London, W. Richardson, 1794), p.136; on the emergence of a National Assembly, see: Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from the Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2014), pp.53-71; Ambrogio A. Caiani, *Louis XVI and the French Revolution, 1789-1792* (Cambridge, CUP, 2012), pp.1-26; a neat introduction to the Estates-General may be found in, Alison Johnson, *Louis XVI and the French Revolution* (Jefferson, NC., McFarland & Company, 2013), p.55-65.

[83] On the history of French monarchical authority, financial administration and power, see: Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence* (Ann Arbor, MI., University of Michigan Press, 2011), and *The Reckoning: Financial Accountability and the Making and Breaking of Nations* (London, Allen Lane, 2014), ch.10 addressed both French and American revolutionary financial situations.

[84] It permeated administrative practice, interior decoration and even gender norms: see, *inter alia*: Clive Church, *Revolution and Red Tape: The French Ministerial Bureaucracy, 1770-1850* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1981), Ralph Kingston, *Bureaucrats and Bourgeois Society: Office Politics and Individual Credit in France, 1798-1848* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.1-11, and William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth Century France* (Oxford, OUP, 1996); on the salon, see: Antoine Lilti, *Les Mondes des Salons: Sociabilité et mondanité à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, Fayard, 2005), esp. ch.6; on pre-revolutionary gender practices, see: Jennifer M. Jones, *Sexing La Mode. Gender, Fashion and Commercial Culture in Old Regime France* (Oxford, OUP, 2004), pp.4-46, and Joan B. Landes, *Visualising the Nation: Gender, Representation, and Revolution in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2003), pp.81-134; on interiors and the nobility, see: Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior: Decoration and Social Space in early Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 1995), pp.103-4.

of the American Revolutionary War in 1776 and the presence of Benjamin Franklin at Versailles, demonstrate how novel experiences of urgency undermined the traditional functionality of the state, in particular the treasury and court society. As historical events appeared to undergo a process of temporalisation, the legitimacy of the French monarchy, steeped in the static, unchanging historicity of Bourbon kingship, shed its authority. Failure to resolve the pre-revolutionary crisis is attributable to the temporal and historical consciousness of the French ancien regime itself; indeed, this consciousness contributed to the temporalisation of historical experience that is characteristic of revolution.

I. Franklin at Versailles

On 21 March 1778, the New World was introduced to the Old. Upon the marble courtyard of the palace of Versailles stepped Benjamin Franklin, ambassador of the twenty-month-old United States of America. Charged with forging an alliance with France against a mutual enemy, England, Franklin created an immediate sensation. Appearing at court "in the dress of an American farmer," remarked Mme de Campan, the queen's lady-in-waiting, Franklin's "lank, unpowdered hair, his round hat, his brown cloth coat, all contrasted with the sequined, embroidered garments, the powdered and perfumed coiffures of the courtiers of Versailles."[85] The marquise de Créquy marvelled at his morose table manners: Franklin would eat asparagus with his fingers – "in a savage way" – and regularly confected a "ragoût philadelphique," which comprised several fresh eggs, butter, salt, pepper and mustard, all blitzed in his wine goblet, which he gleefully consumed "with a teaspoon."[86] His presence at Versailles, where he became a fixed feature of court society, offered a visual juxtaposition of the natural and naïve virtues of America and the perceived artificiality and decrepitude of French aristocracy. In fact, Franklin seemed to incarnate an entirely different temporality. The rusticity of his appearance and the popular philosophical fascination for American agrarianism combined in his public persona, confirming a widely held belief that his fellow Americans, despite their contemporaneity, lived in a time apart.[87] "These people," observed

[85] Mme de Campan, *Mémoires sur la vie privée de Marie-Antoinette, suivis de souvenirs et anecdotes historiques sur les règnes de Louis XIV, de Lous XV, et de Louis XVI* (3 vols., Paris, Baudouin frères, 1823), I, p.234: "Franklin avait paru à la cour avec le costume d'un cultivateur américain: ses cheveux plats sans poudre, son chapeau rond, son habit de drap brun, contrastaient avec les habits pailletés, brodés, les coiffures poudrées et embaumantes des courtisans de Versailles."

[86] Renée Caroline de Froulay, marquise de Créquy, *Souvenirs de la marquise de Créquy de 1710-1803* (10 vols., Paris, Garnier frères, 1873), V, p.179.

[87] Durand Echeverria, *Mirage in the West: A History of the French Image of American Society to 1815* (Princeton UP, 1957), pp.45-8: on 11 April, 1777, the *Courrier d'Avignon* reported how "the Bostonians that we see here are dressed with a simplicity which offers a singular contrast with the elegance of our *petits maîtres*. Their hair is cut round, no curls, no gold lace on their clothes": ibid, p.45; see, also: Peter P. Hill, *French Perceptions of the Early American Republic, 1783-1793* (Philadelphia, PA., 1988), *passim*; similar tropes may be found in the travel literature of Jacques Pierre Brissot de Warville, *New Travels in the United States of America, 1788* (London, J.S. Jordan, 1792), pp.xxi-xxiii; Bette W. Oliver, *Jacques Pierre Brissot in America and France, 1788-1793: In Search*

the abbé Robin, "are still in the happy age where the distinctions of birth and rank are ignored."[88] Franklin had not merely arrived from a different country, but a different place in history. His homespun charms and white marten fur cap – a reminiscence of Rousseau, or was it a symbol of American liberty, mused the *salonnière* Mme du Deffand – evoked a youthful vigour seemingly absent amongst the decaying and increasingly purposeless routines of court society [Fig.1.].

Fig.1. Augustin de Saint-Aubin, 'Benjamin Franklin, né à Boston dans la Nouvelle Angleterre le 17 janier, 1706' (1785-1790) http://www.purl.org/yoolib/inha/8721

Fortunately for Franklin, it was the very vices of the ancien regime that helped soften sympathies for the American cause. In the wake of the Seven Years' War, a conflict largely waged in the British colonies, France had come to understand its humiliation as part of process of historical degradation.[89] In revised editions of his *Histoire des Deux Indes* (1770-1820), Guillaume-Thomas-François, l'abbé Raynal, who had once subscribed to the

of Better (Lanham, MD., Lexington Books, 2016), pp.1-15; Doina Pasca Harsanyi, *Lessons from America: Liberal French Nobles in Exile, 1793-1798* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), pp.4-21; in 1777, William Robertson abandoned his *History of America*, remarking that the outbreak of revolution had introduced an incomprehensible newness that could not be charted by historical authorship: "Inquiries and speculations […] which exist no longer, cannot be interesting," and consequently, "the expectation and attention of mankind are now turned towards the future": *History of America* (3 vols., London, T. Cadell, 1821), I, p.v.

[88] Abbé Robin, *Nouveau Voyage dans l'Amérique Septentrionale, en l'année 1781, et champagne de l'armée de M. le comte de Rochambeau* (Paris, chez Moutard, 1782), p.37: "Ces peuples, encore dans le siècle heureux où les distinctions de la naissance & des rangs sont ignore."

[89] James C. Riley, *The Seven Years War and the Old Regime in France: The Economic and Financial Toll* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1986), pp.104-131; Antonella Alimento, *Réformes fiscales et crises politiques dans la France de Louis XV: De la taille tarifée au cadastre générale* (Brussels, P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2008), pp.98-108

climatological interpretations of the western hemisphere as a site of "degeneration," now framed defeat as part of a trajectory of French degeneracy, one initiated by the wasteful "imbecility" of Louis XIV.[90] In America, French observers did not merely find the trace essence of virtue and political simplicity; they began finding refractions of their own creeping civic decrepitude.[91] The prospect of American Independence therefore offered the opportunity for both vengeance and regeneration, though some, like the former Controller-General Turgot, counselled caution, citing the probable consequences of financing a further war. The duc de Croÿ later recorded a conversation with Franklin, in which the American ambassador explained with amazement how the colonies, "established less than a hundred years ago, had already reached the height of science, power and commerce." To which Croÿ added: "how little time is necessary to form a great empire when it is founded by great and learned men!"[92] The clear implication was that if France was ready to harness a modicum of American vigour then it too might witness a similarly rapid renovation.[93] The mission nevertheless remained immense: Franklin was charged with calling upon all the energies of the ancien regime to enable the birth of a new order.

Matters were hindered by the extreme lack of urgency that radiated from Versailles. Franklin was understandably impatient and conceived of his urgency in historical terms. At the outbreak of the American Revolution, he had depicted the continued oppression of the colonies under the British as a source of creeping decrepitude: This "old rotten State" mired in "extream Corruption," Franklin wrote, threw into relief "the glorious Virtue so predominant in our rising Country." He prophesised that "more Mischief than Benefit" would result if a rupture was not rapidly realised: "I fear They will drag us after them in all the plundering Wars their desperate Circumstance, Injustice and Rapacity, may prompt them to undertake."[94] Ensuring the material support of the French monarchy was therefore vital to securing the innocence and virtue of the American colonies. In a secret memorandum sent to

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[90] Raynal retracted his "degeneration" thesis after the 1781 edition of his *Histoire*; for the impact of Raynal's work upon the French Revolution, see: Anatole Feugère, *Un précurseur de la Révolution; l'abbé Raynal, 1713-1796* (Geneva, Slatkine Reprints, 1970). Raynal's ideas on time and the American Revolution are discussed below.

[91] As Echeverria observes, French visions of American concerned their own "domestic preoccupations" and frustrations with "an antiquated and inefficient social and political order": *Mirage*, p.71, 78; it was precisely to these concerns that Franklin spoke, dismissing American colleagues who sought to ensure French assistance with the prize of commercial gain: "Trade is not the admiration of their noblesse," observed Franklin, "who always govern here" – and who, consequently, were more interested by their (imperilled) civilizational and historical prestige: Ellen R. Cohn, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (40 vols., New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 1978), XXXVI, p.645.

[92] Emmanuel de Croÿ-Solre, *Journal inédit du duc de Croÿ* (4 vols., Paris, Flammarion, 1906-21), III, p.301: "ce pays et cette colonie, établie il n'y avait pas cent ans…fût déjà parvenue à ce comble de science, de force et de commerce et on voit, par là, combien il faut peu de temps pour former un grand Empire, quand le début a de grands hommes instruits."

[93] John Shovlin, *The Political Economy of Virtue: Luxury, Patriotism and the Origins of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2011), pp.80-117; for Franklin's interactions with physiocratic thought, see: Alfred Owen Aldridge, *Franklin and His French Contemporaries* (New York, NY., 1957), pp.23-30.

[94] Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Galloway (25 February, 1775), in William B. Willcox, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, XXI, pp.508-9; Drew McCoy, 'Benjamin Franklin's Vision of a Republican Political Economy for America,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 35 (3, 1978), pp.605-628.

the Congressional Committee of Foreign Affairs in May 1777, Franklin characterised the matter as a race against time. "Every day's experience confirms us, what is indeed pointed out by nature itself, of rendering America independent in every sense of the word." Swift success in the War of Independence, he contested, would provide the necessary escape velocity for the republic: "The present glorious tho' trying contest, will do more to render this independence fixed and certain, if circumstances are favourably improved, than would otherwise have been effected in an age."[95] It was only through a man-made acceleration of the revolutionary effort, achieved in the white heat of war, that the colonies could escape the corrupting orbit of British despotism, "breaking one link of the chains which have heretofore bound the two world together."

His purposes were impeded, however, by the ponderousness of ancien regime decision-making processes. When Franklin first appeared at Versailles, he had already been in France for two years and still failed to achieve recognition of the fledgling United States. In his appeals to the French foreign minister, the comte de Vergennes, Franklin redeployed many of the temporal tropes he had rehearsed in his secret memorandum, stressing that, in the rapidly abbreviating schema of events unfolding in the colonies, the opportunity for France to revenge itself upon the British, and to address the haunting sense of decline detailed by Raynal, would soon dissolve. "[I]f the English are suffer'd once to recover that Country, such an Opportunity of effectual Separation as the present, may not occur again in the Course of Ages…" "I am grown old," Franklin complained, under the "delay" of royal deliberation.[96]

Whilst he may certainly have been growing old, some wondered whether Franklin was also growing indolent. In late 1777 Congress replaced Silas Deane with John Adams as envoy to France. Irked by the stifling snobbery of Versailles, and increasingly impatient with the progress of negotiations, Adams was also staggered to find Franklin luxuriating in all the old world charms of court society. At Passy, Franklin lavishly decorated his drawing rooms and boudoirs with rococo furniture and enthusiastically embraced the gossip-mongers of the Parisian salons. Whilst the "Uncandor, the Prejudices, the Rage, among several Persons here, make me Sick as Death," Adams confined in his diary, it was Franklin's "Love of Ease" and leisurely diplomacy that was liable to "prevent any thorough Reformation of any Thing." Exposure to the court of Versailles, he concluded, had led to Franklin's "Dissipation," robbing him of any sense of urgency.[97] This perhaps overlooked the fact that his entire public

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[95] Franklin and Silas Deane to The Committee of Foreign Affairs (26 May 1777), in Jared Sparks, ed., *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution: being the letters of Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, John Adams…* (6 vols.,Washington, DC., 1818), p.218.

[96] Franklin to the Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes (13 February, 1781), in Barbara B. Oberg, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, XXXIV, p.374; on the importance of the rhetorical gestures in Franklin's diplomacy, see: Gerald Stourzh, *Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1969), esp. ch.5.

[97] John Adams (7 February, 1779), *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, L.H. Butterfield, ed. (4 vols., Cambridge, MA., Belknap Press, 1961), p.19.

image was a fabrication. "Figure me in your mind," Franklin wrote to a friend, "very plainly dress'd, wearing my thin grey straight Hair, that peeps out under my only Coiffure, a fine Fur Cap…Think how this must appear among the Powder'd Heads of Paris."[98] "It is a common observation here," remarked Franklin, "that our cause is *the cause of all mankind*, and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own."[99] It was a consequence of Franklin's carefully contrived public appearance that American "liberty" became a category of historical regeneration, one capable of reinvigorating (or demolishing) decaying institutions.[100] When the French "spoke of him," Adams observed, "they seemed to think he was to restore the golden age."[101]

The idea that the "savage" Franklin had gone native at court was plainly nonsense – he remained indisputably dedicated to the task, even if his methods sometimes pandered to the languid pace of ancien regime politics. Like Adams, Franklin was aware that their cause was running out of time. Without material or diplomatic assistance from the French, the rebel colonies would be forced to face the welter of the British empire alone. In the spring of 1778, the temporal urgency stressed by the American delegation and the historical perceptions of the French aristocracy combined to precipitate an alliance. Responding to a British suggestion "that times may mend" the natural affinity of the colonies and the crown, Franklin expressed incredulity: "when your nation is hiring all the cut-throats it can collect, of all countries and colours to destroy us, it is hard to persuade us not to ask or accept aid from any power that may be prevailed with to grant it; and this only from the hope, that though you now thirst for our blood, and pursue us with fire and sword, you may in some future time treat us kindly." "This," he robustly concluded, "is too much patience to be expected of us."[102] The demands that Franklin and Adams made therefore came to exert novel financial and temporal pressure upon the unhurried political culture of the late ancien regime.[103]

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[98] Franklin to Emma Thompson (8 February, 1777), in Willcox, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, XXIII, p.299.
[99] Franklin to Samuel Cooper (1 May, 1777), in ibid, XXIV, p.7.
[100] The marquis de Condorcet, in his eulogy to Franklin, later wrote: "Men whom the reading of philosophic books had secretly converted to the love of liberty became enthusiastic over the liberty of a foreign people while they waited for the moment when they could recover their own, and they seized this opportunity to avow publicly sentiments which prudence had prevented them from expressing": Condorcet, 'Eloge de Franklin,' cited in Echeverria, *Mirage*, p.42.
[101] Adams, cited in Mary E. Rucker, 'Benjamin Franklin,' in Everett H. Emerson, ed., *American Literature, 1764-1789: The Revolutionary Years* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1977), pp.105-26, here: p.119.
[102] Franklin to David Hartley (12 February, 1778), in Willcox, ed., *Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, XXV, p.651.
[103] See, Louis-Philippe de Ségur, *Mémoires, souvenirs et anecdotes par M. le comte de Ségur* (3 vols., Paris, Firmin-Didot frères, 1859), I, p.102: "au sein d'une vaste monarchie, sanctuaire antique des privilèges nobiliaires, parlementaires, ecclésiastiques, malgré l'habitude d'une longue obéissance au pouvoir arbitraire, la cause des Américains insurgés fixait toutes les attentions," and p.149: "nos drapeaux conduisaient à la victoire les drapeaux de l'indépendance, et touts nos jeunes courtisans, colonnes futures de la vieille aristocratie, couraient, sur les côtes de l'Amérique, puiser les principes de l'égalité, le mépris des privilèges et la haine contre tout despotisme."

II. Etiquette and ennui

The sensation that surrounded Franklin was partly the product of boredom. "Everybody is bored," wrote Mme du Deffand in 1771, informing her doting correspondent, Horace Walpole, that it was "this hateful ennui which haunts each one of us and which we all wish to avoid."[104] Deffand herself suffered from a particularly pernicious form of boredom, which induced insomnia and melancholia, often reducing her to a bedridden state of compulsive letter writing. Whilst her experience of ennui was a private trauma, boredom had become all but institutionalised at Versailles. In the very same year, the sixteen-year old dauphine of France sent a letter to her sister, Marie-Christine, complaining of her excruciatingly uneventful existence at court. "Our life here is truly monotonous."[105] The luxurious self-indulgence that would later come to consume Marie-Antoinette was symptomatic of her desire for distraction.[106] Removing herself to the *hameau* of the Petit Trianon provided temporary exile, but evading ennui entirely was impossible since its organising principle was underpinned by the regulation and routine of court etiquette.[107] Ennui was thus the evocation of a peculiar perception of time: it was an inevitable emotional response to the predictable, foreseeable, and interminable experience of daily life under the ancien regime.

Although royal etiquette had been largely established during the reign of Louis XIV, the intervening century had occasioned few alterations in the ceaseless regularity of court procedure and protocol. Louis XVI still observed the *lever* and *coucher*; he still dined publicly – and with traditional Bourbon gusto – at the *grand couvert*. Every minute of every hour of every day remained minutely pre-prepared. Nothing was unpredicted because nothing was permitted to change. Proximity to the monarchy, like the movement of the monarch himself, was governed by temporal as much as spatial imperatives.[108] Court ritual was premised upon both a quotidian and a more profound, ahistorical iteration. "Etiquette still existed at court with all the forms it had acquired under Louis XIV," recalled Mme de

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[104] Mme du Deffand, cited in Benedetta Craveri, *Madame du Deffand and Her World* (trans. Teresa Waugh), (London, Peter Halban, 1994), p.100; see, also: W. Klerks, *Madame du Deffand: essai sur l'ennui* (Leiden, Universitaire Pers, 1961), pp.15-23.
[105] F. Feuillet de Conche, ed., *Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette, et Madame Élisabeth, lettres et document inédits* (6 vols., Paris, Henri Plon, 1864-1873), I, p.24.
[106] For Marie-Antoinette's endless pursuit of boredom-defying pleasure, see the timeless biography by Stefan Zweig, *Marie Antoinette* (1932), (trans. Eden and Cedar Paul), (London, Pushkin Press, 2010) pp.123-39.
[107] On early-modern etiquette and courtly cultures, see: Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger, *Les Vieux Habits de l'Empereru: Une histoire culturelle des institutions du Saint-Empire à l'époque moderne* (trans. Christopher Duhamelle), (Paris, Éditions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 2013), and 'Rituals of Decision Making? Early Modern European Assemblies of Estates as Acts of Symbolic Communication, in Yoshihisa Hattori, ed., *Political Order and the Forms of Communication in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Rome, Viella, 2014), pp.63-95; some of these ideas are pursued in a different context by Jan Hennings, 'Diplomacy, Culture and Space: The Muscovite Court,' in B. B. Johannsen, K. A. Ottenheym, *European Courts and Court Residences outside Habsburg and Valois/Bourbon Territories 1500-1700* (Odense, University of Southern Denmark, 2015), pp.56-63.
[108] Hugh Murray Baillie, 'Etiquette and the Planning of the State Apartments in Baroque Palaces,' *Archaeologica* 101 (January 1997), pp.169-99.

Campan – although, during the reign of Louis XVI, it was gradually robbed of its "dignity" and "gaiety." The continuities of court etiquette therefore prevented the possible divergence of past and future, reducing the passage of time to both a structural and historical insignificance.[109] The experience of historical time at Versailles, which was anchored to social, cultural and institutional units of action that derived meaning and authority from the routines of etiquette, eternalised the processes of the present. Unlike state ceremonials, such as the coronation or *lit de justice*, in which the monarch emulated the traditional authority of his ancestors and thereby situated himself within the arc of regal history, court etiquette suspended history. Louis XIV had stymied the post-mortem power of his predecessors by shifting temporal focus onto the charismatic comportment and daily movements of his royal person.[110] King and courtier remained nominally bound to these rhythms of daily experience because the time structures they implied continued to confirm the "prestige-character" associated with the dispensation of sinecures and the distribution of power.

A consequence of this temporal micromanagement was ennui, which gradually assailed the late ancien regime. As the abbé de Véri noted in 1774, "kings are more susceptible to ennui than other men and the etiquette of every minute is in part the cause."[111] In consequence, observed de Campan, Versailles was no longer "the place at which to seek for assemblies where French spirit and grace were displayed. The focus of wit and wisdom was Paris."[112] The nobility gradually decamped to the capital under the burdens of boredom, only to grudgingly return for occasional festivities. "We only went [there]," remarked the comtesse de Genlis, "complaining and moaning, repeating that there was nothing as boring as Versailles and the court.'"[113] It was to boredom that Adams attributed the lackadaisical progress of Franco-American diplomacy. On 28 March, 1778, he jotted in his diary how "nothing could be more tedious to me than this idle Life," in which a "Love of Ease" trumped the urgency of action. "I had not yet learned the French Word, Ennui, but I felt enough of it."[114]

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[109] Koselleck, 'Time and History' (trans. Kerstin Behnke), in idem, *The Practice of Conceptual History*, pp.110-14.

[110] For descriptions of Louis XIV as "*maître du temps*," see: Klaus Maurice, *Die Französische Pendule des 18. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Ikonologie* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967), p.102; Ralph E. Giesey, 'The King Imagined,' in Keith M. Baker, ed., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (4 vols., Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1987), I, pp.41-59.

[111] Joseph-Alphonse, l'abbé de Véri, *Journal de l'abbé de Véri, publié avec une introduction et des notes par le Bon Jehan de Witte* (2 vols., Paris, J. Tallandier, 1928-30), I, p.153. "Les rois sont plus susceptibles d'ennui que les autres hommes et l'étiquette de toutes les minutes en est en partie la cause."

[112] Campan, *Mémoires*, I, p.12: "L'étiquette existait encore à la cour avec toutes les formes qu'elle avait reçues sous Louis XIV…; de lieu de réunion où l'on vit se déployer l'esprit et la grâce des Français, il n'en fallait point chercher à Versailles. Le foyer de l'esprit et des lumières était à Paris."

[113] Stéphanie Félicité, comtesse de Genlis, *Œuvres complètes de Madame la Comtesse de Genlis* (59 vols., Bruxelles, P.J. de Mat, 1825-9), II, p.239: "On n'allait faire [la] cour à Versailles qu'en se plaignant et en gémissant; on répétait que rien n'était ennuyeux comme Versailles et la cour."

[114] Adams, *Diary*, IV, p.28, and II, p.346.

The perception of historical time in colonial America was also conditioned by the sensation of tedium.[115] Prior to the Revolution, observed Thomas Jefferson, "the quiet & monotonous course of colonial life had been disturbed by no alarm."[116] History proceeded at an uneventful pace, obviating political innovation. Like the link between court etiquette and the culture of ennui, colonial monotony was the experiential corollary of "habit."[117] The political "difficulties," Jefferson surmised, which eventually produced a revolutionary confrontation between the colonies and "our representatives," were derived from "habit and despair," not "reflection and conviction." In his *Autobiography*, he recalled how, in 1769, the colonial mind was still "circumscribed within narrow limits," confining political imagination to "an *habitual* belief that it was our duty to be subordinate to the mother country in all matters of government…"[118] In the Virginia House of Burgesses, for example, the "dull monotony of colonial subservience" was reinforced by the "negative" that the King's Council held over all colonial deliberations. For Jefferson, the matter was also indissoluble from another established form of authority: slavery.[119] Colonial subjects had been "nursed and educated in the daily habit of seeing the degraded condition, both bodily & mental, of those unfortunate beings, not reflecting that that degradation was very much the work of themselves & their fathers." The "monotony" that permeated colonial life was therefore sustained by extreme hierarchies of power. The dynamics of time and history were locked in place by the "daily habit" of observing the operations of slavery, an institution perpetuated by "the work" of multiple generations that bound the experiences of contemporaries to those of their predecessors, to "themselves & their fathers." This endless iterability of historical experience inhibited the political imagination since, without the possibility of disruption, there could emerge "little reflection on the value of liberty," either for enslaved blacks or indentured white colonists. Before the Revolution, America seemed unhindered by history: "disturbed by no alarm" and governed exclusively by "habit," the temporality of colonial life was "quiet" because it seemed to stretch across such a "monotonous," featureless expanse of history.[120]

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[115] On pre-Revolutionary "sensibilities," see: Knott, *Sensibility and the American Revolution*, pp.153-94.
[116] Thomas Jefferson to Edward Coles (25 August 1814).
[117] Interestingly, in her study of American emotionology and political power, Nicole Eustace makes no mention of "monotony" or "boredom": *Passion is the Gale: Emotion, Power, and the Coming of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2008); likewise Michael E. Woods, in *Emotional and Sectional Conflict in the Antebellum United States* (Cambridge, CUP, 2013), does not draw upon Jefferson's association of political tedium and the institution of slavery.
[118] Thomas Jefferson, *Autobiography* (1821), (Mineola, NY., Dover Publications Inc., 2012), p.3.
[119] As Hannah Spahn has demonstrated, Jefferson regarded aristocracy and slavery as analogous institutions, outdated and evocative of "monotony" since both valued habit over reason or "conscience": *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History* (Charlottesville, University of North Carolina Press, 2011), pp.55-6; the impact of slavery upon Jefferson's (shifting) ideas of progress and historical change are discussed in Ari Helo, *Thomas Jefferson's Ethics and the Politics of Human Progress: The Morality of a Slaveholder* (Cambridge, CUP, 2014), pp.109-38; they are also discussed in greater depth in chapter 5.
[120] See: Peter S. Onuf, 'The Empire of Liberty: Land of the Free and Home of the Slave,' in Andrew Shankman, ed., *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor, and the Conflict for a Continent* (New York, NY., Routledge, 2014), pp.195-218, see: p.207.

At Versailles, the permanence of regal spectacle and the endlessness of court ceremony had created a similar elongation in the experience of time.[121] During the reign of Louis XIV, this had served to stress the interminability of monarchical *gloire*. In *L'Apollon François* (1684), Antoine Bauderon de Sénecé depicted royal authority as existing beyond the bounds of time and history. The king "is infinite in time, since his renown as well as his empire will equal the duration of centuries."[122] Past and future were subsumed within the person of the king who, in turn, erected a complimentary cultural apparatus – the court – that operated within a static, unchanging present. This was the essence of Absolutist temporality. The affairs of state, the orchestration of war, and the signing of treaties were all restricted to the sole participation of the sovereign protagonist, which naturally mitigated political unpredictability and thus stabilised the structure of history.[123] The *Roi-Soleil*, like the body at the centre of the solar system, radiated authority and fixed the orbit of his courtiers by adhering to a cyclical, celestial, predictable temporal regime. The perception of permanency created by the Absolutist state was further underpinned by the diurnal predictability of court routine.[124] "With an almanac and a watch," remarked the duc de Saint-Simon, "one could tell, three hundred leagues away, what [the king] was doing."[125]

The early-modern French court, rigidified by etiquette, the pursuit of privilege and the temporal infinitude of monarchical authority, therefore ensured "the guaranteed futurity of the past."[126] For Louis XIV, the brilliancy and legitimacy of power was sustained by this ahistoricity – even the ravages of old age were effaced, as in Hyacinth Rigaud's time-turning portrait of the sexagenarian king: witness the lithe, ballet-ready legs (which concealed royal infirmity), the luscious locks (despite the absence of a single hair on the king's head), and the plump, proud lips (hiding a toothless, sunken mouth).[127] Under his successors, a sensual court

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[121] Court routine became "an unending pursuit" for Louis XIV and his successors: Jeroen Duindam, *Vienna and Versailles: The Courts of Europe's Dynastic Rivals, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, CUP, 2003), pp.181-222.

[122] Antoine Bauderon de Sénecé, *L'Apollon françois, ou le paralelle des Vertus Heroïques du Tres-Auguste, Tres Puissant & Tres-Invincible Roy de France & de Navarre* (1684), cited in Jean-Marie Apostolidès, *Le roi-machine: spectacle et politique au temps de Louis XIV* (Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1981), p.138.

[123] On the temporality of the early-modern absolutist state, see: Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.20 and idem., *Critique and Crisis: Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, MA., MIT Press, 1988), p.163.

[124] This was not an exclusively French phenomenon: according to Antoine de Brunel, who visited the court of Philip IV of Spain in 1655, the "occupations" of the king "are always the same, and move in such unchanging step that, day by day, he knows exactly what he will do for his whole life." As a result, "the weeks, the months, the years and every part of the day bring no change in his pattern of life, and never enable him to see anything new": Antoine de Brunel, *Voyage d'Espagne fait en 1655, contenant, entre plusieurs particularitez de ce royaume, trois discours politiques sur les affaires du Protecteur d'Angleterre, la Reine de Suède, et du Duc de Lorraine* (Cologne, P. Marteau, 1666), p.33.

[125] The duc de Saint-Simon, cited in Ernest Lavisse, *Histoire de France depuis les origines jusqu'à la Révolution: Louis XIV. La Fronde, Le Roi, Colbert* (Paris, Hachette, 1905), VII, p.124.

[126] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.22.

[127] Peter Burke, *The Fabrication of Louis XIV* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 1994), pp.125-34; the final years of Louis XIV's reign were also marked by a gathering ennui: in a letter to Elise de La Maisonfort, which reads like a warning to the eighteenth-century, Mme de Maintenon, the king's second wife, declared: "How can I make you realise the boredom which devours the great of this world and the trouble they have in occupying their time?" She was "once young and pretty," "tasted the pleasures of this life," and "lived for years in a brilliant

aesthetic constructed for the idle passing of time had become a crushingly tedious routine of repetitive and increasingly meaningless gestures and customs.[128] Yet those routines persisted. By the time Louis XVI ascended the throne, this system was not merely archaic – it was palpably anachronistic.[129] The passage of merely a few years of revolutionary history seemed to situate his reign at an historical distance of centuries. The customs of the "ancient court," recalled the comte d'Hézecques in 1804, had been swept aside "under the scythe of time," and seemed "already to be of the Middle Ages."[130]

III. The clockwork court

During the reign of Louis XVI, in the salon de Mercure, the official bedchamber of the king, there sat a clock. Encased within a glass-panelled rosewood box, the mechanism, decorated with chiselled bronze ornaments and installed in 1706, was more than a mere timekeeper: it was a baroque *objet du pouvoir* [Fig.2]. On the hour, the clock would clink into function. Above the face, gilded cockerels "crowed and flapped their wings," a miniaturised Louis XIV "emerged from a temple, and Fame, in a cloud, came and crowned the monarch to the sound

Fig. 2. Antoine Morand, Clock in the Salon de Mercure, Grand appartement du Roi, Versailles (1706)

society," but now her existence was a source of "fearful emptiness, an anxiety, a lassitude…": Nancy Mitford, *The Sun King* (London, Random House, 2011), p.150.

[128] Georgia J. Cowart, *The Triumph of Pleasure: Louis XIV and the Politics of Spectacle* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2008), p.17.

[129] Parallels are drawn between Frederick II's court and the context in America, in: Jürgen Overhoff, *Freidrich der Grosse un George Washington: Zwei Wege der Aufklärung* (Stuttgart, Klett-Cotta, 2011), pp.9-22.

[130] Félix, comte de d'Hézecques, *Souvenirs d'un page de la cour de Louis XVI* (Paris, Dider, 1873), p.ii-iii.

of a chime."[131] The king, situated literally above the passage of time, was the master of the mechanism. Under Louis XIV, the court, like the clock itself, operated according to his personal authority. He was, as Saint-Simon remarked, "la mécanique" – both engineer and inventor of the imposing machine. As such, the temporal consciousness of every courtier ticked in time with his every movement.[132] The ceremonial durations of dressing, feasting, waking and even sleeping that surrounded the monarch were timed meticulously. Louis XIV was the mobilizing force at the centre of the entire mechanism and, by implication, the entire disciplinary apparatus of his kingdom.[133] The rhythms of court routine therefore became simulacra of the royal control over time. Every morning, during the ceremony of the *lever,* a *valet de chambre* would publicly wind-up the royal watch, before placing it back into the pocket of the king.[134] It was a symbolic reminder that the events of the forthcoming day were, like those of yesterday and tomorrow, foreordained and regulated by the chronometric power of the monarch.

As Norbert Elias has observed, during the final decades of the ancien regime the court became, "a ghostly *perpetuum mobile* that continued to operate regardless of any direct use-value, being impelled, as by an inexhaustible motor, by the competition for status and power of the people enmeshed in it." Privilege and preferment remained central indices for the French nobility, and they "submitted to them, even while criticising them, because they accorded with tradition." During his declining years, Louis XIV, aged and infirm, gradually released his grip on the court; yet whilst he had "to a certain extent shaped and controlled the court tradition," under the last Bourbon kings "the tradition controlled the people, none of whom was in a position to transform or develop it in keeping with the changes that were slowly taking place in French society."[135] Whilst ennui became epidemic during the late eighteenth-century, the temporal experience of court society had not always been beyond monarchical manipulation. According to André Félibien, court historian to Louis XIV, it was the *éclat* of the monarch that enabled him to regulate the speed of time. "[A]s only the king can assemble great armies in such little time and conquer with the rapidity that we have seen,

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[131] d'Hézecques, *Souvenirs d'un page*, p.144; on clock-making and the consumption of time in pre-revolutionary Paris, see: Marie-Agnès Dequidt, *Horlogers des Lumières: Temps et société à Paris au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, CTHS-Histoire, 2014), pp.39-79, 81-118.

[132] Diego de Savedra Fajardo, *Idea de un Principe Politico* (1640): "[I]n the clockwork of government the prince should be not only a hand but also the escapement that tells all other wheels the time to move": cited in Otto Mayr, *Authority, Liberty & Automatic Machinery in Early Modern Europe* (Baltimore, ML., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), p.103.

[133] Nikolaus Wegmann argues that the precision with which the court society conformed to rules in conduct and gesture correlated with the necessity to demarcate court society from lower orders: *Diskurse der Empfindsamkeit: Zur Geschichte eines Gefühls in der Literatur des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart, Metzler, 1988), pp.56-70; for Louis XIV as *maître du temps*, see: Klaus Maurice, *Die Französische Pendule des 18. Jahrhunderts: Ein Beitrag zu ihrer Ikonologie* (Berlin, De Gruyter, 1967), p.102.

[134] Pierre Mesnage, Pierre Verlet*, La Mesure du temps* (Paris, Draeger, 1970), p.86.

[135] Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (trans. Edmund Jephcott), (Dublin, University College Dublin, 2006; originally published, 1969), pp.95, 292.

[…] it is also this great prince who can, with similar promptitude, gather together so many musicians, dancers and instrument players…"[136] Regal spectacle, in contrast to court ceremony, developed a celebratory velocity that created "surprise" and "admiration" amongst an otherwise bored nobility. The occasional reorganisation of time, experienced here as an instantaneous exposition of Absolutist authority, further reinforced the stratification of power at Versailles. The temperamental timidity of Louis XVI, however, meant that the delicate, mechanistic equilibrium of noble privileges, court etiquette and royal governance was allowed to ossify. The machine had come to control the mechanic.

Within the clockwork confines of the court, individuals were already reduced to mere mechanisms. Courtiers became the components of a much larger apparatus of privilege-dispensation, dedicating themselves to a single analogue task: self-advancement. As they encircled the mainspring monarch, they were obliged, in return for their proximity, to offer their fealty. The regularity with which this process proceeded enabled the historian Jacob-Nicolas Moreau to ridicule the French nobility as "mute automatons." In 1775, he warned the recently crowned king that,

> at your *lever*, inside your palace, and on those frequent occasions where so many of those who only present themselves before you…seeking with such attention to spy upon your slightest movement, and to read in your eyes their interests, their hopes, and even their duties, yes, sire, it is amidst this insidious crowd that you will, unfortunately, be under constant siege…[137]

Whilst his purpose was to counsel the king against undue influence, Moreau had implicitly contained Louis within the conceptual categorisation of the court machine. By citing the attention awarded to the "slightest movement" of every royal gesture – from the flickering of his eyes, to the dressing of his person, – Moreau presented a king who operated, like his courtiers, according to automatic impulses. The parallel, however, had not been chosen at random. During the previous decades, the courts of Europe had surveyed a parade of man-machines, of automata – mechanical devices that mimicked human and animal behaviour according to pre-set clockwork codes and components.[138] Mechanisms such as the Flute

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[136] André Félibien, *Relation de la Feste de Versailles, du dix-huitiéme Iuillet mil six cens soixante-huit* (Paris, chez Pierre le Petit, 1688), pp.59-60; on the instantaneous organisational capacity of the seventeenth century Absolutist French state, see: Roland Racevskis, 'Time, Postal Practices, and Daily Life in Mme de Sévigné's Letters,' in David Lee Rubin, Julia V. Douthwaite, eds., *Rethinking Cultural Studies: Exemplary Essays. EMF Studies in Early Modern France. Volume 2* (Charlottesville, VA., Rookwood Press, 2001), pp.29-47.

[137] Jacob-Nicolas Moreau, *Les devoirs du prince réduits à un seul principe, ou Discours sur la justice…* (Versailles, l'Imprimerie du Roi, 1775), pp.170-1: "À votre lever, dans l'intérieur de votre palais, & dans ces occasions fréquentes où tant d'hommes qui, ne se présentant à vos regards comme des automates muets, n'en chercheront qu'avec plus d'attention à épier vos moindres mouvemens, & à lire dans vos yeux leurs intérêts, leurs espérances & presque leurs devoirs, oui, monseigneur, au milieu de cette foule insidieuse dont vous serez assez malheureux pour être sans cesse assiégé…"

[138] Minsoo Kang, *Sublime Dreams of Living Machines: The Automaton in the European Imagination* (Cambridge MA., Harvard University Press, 2011); Jessica Riskin, *The Restless Clock: A History of the Centuries-Long Argument Over What Makes Living Things Tick* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2016), pp.189-213.

Player and Defecating Duck, presented to the Académie des Sciences by Jacques Vaucanson in 1738, were soon displayed for the amusement of the nobility.[139] The exhibition of these automata, however, remained largely restricted to royal palaces. Even public demonstrations, such as those of the watchmaker Pierre Jaquet-Droz in Paris in 1775, charged such exorbitant admission fees that they became exclusive, elitist events. The closed world of the court and the environment in which the automaton operated became increasingly synonymous. In fact, as the courtiers gazed upon these mechanical marvels, many observers wondered whether the two were interchangeable.[140]

This perception was made tangible by exposure to court etiquette. The comtesse de Noailles, lady of honour to Marie-Antoinette, was mockingly renamed 'Madame Etiquette' on account of her fastidious attention to royal routine. In her journal, the princess de Lamballe compared the comtesse to an automaton, marvelling at the predictability and measurability of her every movement:

> Her motions were regulated like clockwork. So methodical was she in all her operations of mind and body, that from the beginning of the year to its end, she never deviated a moment. Every hour has its peculiar occupation. Her element was etiquette, […] she had her rules even for the width of petticoats, that the queens and princesses might have no temptation to straddle over a rivulet, or crossing, of unroyal size.[141]

The parameters of acceptable behaviour, which she observed meticulously, confined the comtesse de Noailles to a temporality that was as unchanging on a daily basis as it was from one year to the next. This refusal to deviate from prefigured routines rendered the idea of progress or change unintelligible. If "every hour" possessed prescribed procedures of action already informed by the procedures of previous hours, then the time horizon of the court was infinite. Etiquette was therefore premised upon non-finality, which naturally accorded with clockwork because it too proceeded ceaselessly. The internal periodization of this experiential space reproduced itself automatically.[142] Court society moved forward from event to event through time not history, insofar as horary, diurnal and annual experiences were collapsed into a single, contiguous, undifferentiated category. The experiential temporality of the Versailles court was thus empty, or time*less*. Of course, once these routines had been established the figurations of tradition could not be broken, since, as Moreau noticed, their

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[139] Daniel Cottom, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Digestion,' *Representations* 66 (Spring, 1999), pp.52-74; Riskin, 'The Defecating Duck, or, the Ambiguous Origins of Articial Life,' *Critical Inquiry* 29 (4, Summer, 2003), pp.599-633.
[140] Simon Schaffer, 'Enlightened Automata,' in William Clark, Jan Golinski, Simon Schaffer eds., *The Sciences in Enlightened Europe* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1999), p.126-66;
[141] Madame du Hausset*, Secret memoirs of the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI, taken from the memoirs of Madame du Hausset, Lady's Maid to Madame de Pompadour, and from the Journal of the Princess Lamballe* (2 vols., London, Grolier Society, 1904), I, pp.227-8.
[142] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.229.

automatic observance satisfied the ambitions of prestige-hungry courtiers.[143] In other words, the clock could not be dismantled – and the ancien regime could not be reformed – without also smashing the mechanism.

Stifled by her rigid supervision, Marie-Antoinette soon dismissed the comtesse. The young, fancy-free queen, however, had already acquired the air of an automaton.[144] In 1785, the comparison was reinforced by the appearance at court of a two-foot tall, dulcimer-playing girl. The machine, devised by the artisans Peter Kintzing and David Roentgen, sat before a wooden sounding-board and, when wound, would strike the metal strings with small hammers, producing several preprogrammed tunes. When contemporaries detailed their observations of automata, they, like Moreau, also recorded with special care the moments of anthropological accuracy. According to the records of François Lassone, *médecin* to the queen, the dulcimer player exhibited "movements of the head and a varied expression in her eyes and gaze, which are very pleasant and a surprising illusion."[145] Of course, once the first moments of surprise faded, the gestures quickly became repetitive; and however miraculous its intricate movements, the repertoire of the automaton could exhibit nothing unforeseen, unpredictable or accidental. Its future actions were indistinguishable from those already undertaken. Dressed in pearl and embroidered lace, the coiffured machine bore remarkable resemblance to the queen, for whom it was created. Marie-Antoinette, however, seemed to share both visual *and* kinematic similarity with the music-making android. Her movements appeared mechanical; even those designed to mimic natural, human sentiments – such as anticipation or surprise – often seemed contrived, insincere, or laced with boredom. In 1778, John Adams had observed Marie-Antoinette during the *grand couvert*. As he gazed upon "the magnificent Spectacle of a great Queen swallowing her Royal Supper in a single Spoonful," Adams was struck by her automatism: "This was all performed like perfect Clockwork, not a feature of her face, nor a Motion of any part of her Person, especially her Arm and her hand could be criticised as out of order."[146] Though she reviled the cloying necessities of etiquette, Marie-Antoinette was also hostage to them: within the context of Versailles, she too became another gear in the great machine, apparently devoid of personal volition, trapped by the rigid temporal regime of the court.

Beyond Versailles, the ancien regime was populated by human-automata. At her salon, Mme du Deffand found herself surrounded by individuals resembling "spring-wound

[143] Elias, *The Court Society*, p.95-6.
[144] On Marie-Antoinette and contemporary scientific and pseudo-scientific discoveries, see: Charles Coulston Gillespie, *Science and Polity in France: The End of the Old Regime* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1980), p.247, 275; and on female automatons, see: Julie Wosk, *My Fair Ladies: Female Robots, Androids, and Other Artificial Eves* (New Brunswick, Rutger University Press, 2015), pp.31-54.
[145] Cited in Adelheid Voskuhl, *Androids in the Enlightenment: Mechanics, Artisans, and Cultures of the Self* (Chiacgo, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2013), p.119.
[146] Adams, *Diary*, IV, p.133.

machines [*machines à ressort*], who went, came, spoke, laughed, all without thinking, without reflecting, without feeling." Whilst outwardly similar to other humans, the inhabitants of polite society seemed to operate according to internal, hidden devices, which, like the dulcimer player, denied them the capacity for spontaneous thought, action or sentiment. "[E]ach played their role out of habit."[147] After all, there was no need for an alteration in the patterns or performance of sociability because, beyond the content of court gossip, nothing ever changed. Since salon conversation still largely depended upon the rumour mill emanating from Versailles, the *salonnières* also rotated around court rituals. And when news was not forthcoming, ennui radiated outwards like concentric waves from the centre of French society. In 1766, Horace Walpole was left benumbed by his experience of the Parisian salon. "I that am used to the rapidity of events in London," he wrote, "am astonished at the dearth of Paris." "They have no occurrencies but deaths and marriages and promotions, no revolutions, no separations, no horse races, nothing that constitutes history." And yet the chatter continued regardless, eking out every last minute of potential news or gossip: "they lived nine or ten weeks upon the Dauphin's death."[148]

Although the comte d'Artois would later introduce the French to horse-racing (in a bid to subvert his own boredom), the social pursuits of the ancien regime were easily condemned as mere distraction, as a "puerile and destructive luxury." A fact that, as Louis-Sébastien Mercier observed in his time travelling novel, *L'An 2440, rêve s'il en fut jamais* (1770), had clearly addled the brains of the nobility: "a body without a soul was covered with lace; and the automaton then resembled a man." Glancing beyond the court, Mercier furtively asked: "How many automata, with human faces, do we see at court, at the bar, in the academies, who owe their speech to the breath of invisible agents; when they cease, the machines remain dumb." It is highly instructive that Mercier, in order to envisage a society denuded of its aristocratic "set of automatons," would need to abruptly escape into a utopian future, to evacuate a present atrophied by inequality.[149]

Whilst machine metaphors had long generated ideas of social hierarchy, during the final decades of the eighteenth century the intellectual and cultural associations of the automaton shifted in descriptive detail. The presence of mechanics and clockmakers at the

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[147] Mme du Deffand, *Lettres de la Marquise du Deffand à Horace Walpole: depuis Comte d'Orford, écreites dans les années 1766 à 1780…* (2 vols., Paris, Firmin-Didot frères, 1864), I, p.46: "[H]ommes et femmes me paraissaient des machines à ressort, qui allaient, venaient, parlaient, riaient, sans penser, sans réfléchir, sans sentir; chacun jouait son rôle par habitude."

[148] Horace Walpole to Mary Coke (Paris, 4 January 1766), in W.S. Lewis, Robert A. Smith, Charles H. Bennett, eds., *The Yale Edition of Horace Walpole's Correspondence* (48 vols., New Haven, Yale University Press, 1937-83), XXXI, p.92, 93.

[149] In its temporal perspective, the novel cannot be viewed as a radical revolutionary work since, as Robert Darnton has argued, the future of France is present by Mercier "as a fait accompli," as an approaching present that, contrary to the interventionist Jacobin vision of historical time, possessed a predetermined temporal velocity that defied manipulation by human agents: Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York, NY., W.W. Norton, 1996), p.120.

court of Louis XIV had reinforced the image of the monarch as the mainspring of power. But to investigate the machine under his successors, to discover that the supposedly dynamic force of royal authority was itself regulated by the escapements of etiquette, a component that could easily be replicated or replaced, obliterated monarchical mystique. The technical demonstrations of Jacquet-Droz, Roentgen and others therefore exposed the inherent irrationalism of court routine, subverting the political and cultural machinery that undergirded it. For their American contemporaries, the objective was strictly transparency and elucidation. The supreme craftsman of the early Republic was David Rittenhouse, whose orreries – hand-operated, heliocentric planetary displays that replicated, in miniature, the cosmic architecture of the solar system – were designed, he wrote, to "astonish the skilful and curious examiner."[150] Rittenhouse devised orreries that, unlike their predecessors, sat vertically, like a clock, and were designed to prominently display the internal gears and cogs, thereby juxtaposing the visible and hidden. These orreries were also objects of power. Actuated by carefully constructed clockwork mechanisms, it was possible for anyone to pre-programme the device via a hand-crank that would instruct the orrery to reproduce the cosmic phenomena of a given future date. For American lexicographer, Noah Webster, the mechanical metaphor possessed obvious political ramifications. In 1787, he cited integrity and public virtue – the "principles and manners" of the American people – as the true "springs of government." According to this formulation, it was the citizen, not the monarch, who was the sovereign mechanic of the state. Later, in 1791, Thomas Paine would make this distinction absolute: "It requires some talents to be a common mechanic; but to be a king requires only the animal figure of a man – a sort of breathing automaton."

In France, meanwhile, automatic machines that resembled members of the royal family heightened the possibility that the king and his courtiers might be nothing more than automata themselves. These intellectual associations would be put to polemical effect during the Revolution. According to one radical broadsheet, published weeks before the monarchy was abolished in 1792, the queen was reported to have yelled at her ineffective monarch: "shut up! if I put your crown on the head of an automaton, it would do a lot more than you!"[151] A month after the royal escape to Varennes in 1791, with the future viability of the monarchy in doubt, the *philosophe* and mathematician, the marquis de Condorcet, posed as a "young mechanic," boasting of his ability to fashion within fifteen days a replacement

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[150] Rittenhouse, cited in Henry C. King and John R. Millburn, *Geared to the Stars: The Evolution of Planetariums, Orreries, and Astronomical Clocks* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1978), p.27; see also, Rittenhouse, 'An Oration, Delivered…before the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia,' in William Barton, *Memoirs of the Life of David Rittenhouse* (Philadelphia, E. Parker, 1813), p.568; on virtue and automatism, see: Colleen Terrell, '"Republican Machines": Franklin, Rush, and the Manufacture of Civic Virtue in the Early American Republic,' *Early American Studies* 1 (2, 2003), pp.100-132.

[151] *Le ménage en déroute, ou guerre ouverte entre Louis XVI et sa femme* (Paris, l'Imprimerie patriotique, 1792), p.6: "Tais-toi, lui fait on dire par la Reine, tais-toi, si je mettois ta couronne sur la tête d'un ottomate [automate], il feroit plus que toi."

automata court. As a student of Vaucanson, the mechanic claimed he could create a king indistinguishable from the present monarch: "He will sustain, as well as any other king, conversation with his great officials. An automaton chamberlain will present him with his shirt, a master of the wardrobe will place it over his neck." Component parts could be replaced if, for example, there was "a change of religion," or if a state occasion demanded it. The mechanic even claimed that his automata would eliminate the most significant source of political uncertainty that afflicted the crown: the hereditary succession. "My king would not be dangerous to liberty, and yet, in repairing him with care, he would be eternal, which is even nicer than being hereditary. We could even declare him inviolable without injustice, and call him infallible without absurdity."[152] With Voltairean verve, Condorcet had demonstrated that if the monarchy could be understood as a machine, assembled on the premise of clockwork functionality, then it could also be disassembled like a machine, and the clock suspended. Moreover, since the automaton derived movement and purpose via mechanical means, so the legitimacy of the ancien regime could also be seen as the result of a motion already imparted – of habit, routine, historical tradition; all of which compounded the "injustice" and "absurdity" of a monarchy that operated without any reference to reason. Recasting the king as an automaton, as a clockwork mechanism, was implicitly to suggest that he did not control time, but that time controlled him.

IV. The temporising crown

On 22 June 1789, a mob gathered outside Versailles. Lunching with the duc de Liancourt was the English traveller Arthur Young, who discovered, despite the external ruckus, that an atmosphere of perfect insouciance dominated the dining table. "In the streets," wrote Young, "such anxiety was on every face, that the importance of the moment was written in the physiognomy; […] but amongst a class so much higher as those I dined with, I was struck with the difference. There were not in thirty persons five in whose countenances you could guess that any extraordinary event was going forward…" Echoing Mme du Deffand, Young observed his fellow diners function like automata, seemingly unaware of exterior events:

[152] Condorcet, 'Lettre d'un jeune mécanicien aux auteurs du républicain' (16 juillet, 1791), in A. O'Connor, F. Arago, *Œuvres de Condorcet* (12 vols., Paris, Firmin-Didot frères 1847-9), XII, pp.239-41, here: p.240: "Un chambellan automate lui présentera sa chemise, un grand maître de la garde-robe lui mettra le col," and p.241: "Mon roi ne serait pas dangereux pour la liberté, et cependant, en le réparant avec soin, il serait éternel, ce qui est encore plus beau que d'être héréditaire. On pourrait même le déclarer inviolable sans injustice, et le dire infaillible sans absurdité." On Condorcet's and their relationship with the Revolution, see: David Williams, *Condorcet and Modernity* (Cambridge, CUP, 2004), p.250-76; and Ruth Scurr, 'Varieties of Democracy in the French Revolution,' in Joanna Innes and Mark Philp, eds., *Re-Imagining Democracy in the Age of Revolutions: America, France, Britain, Ireland, 1750-1850* (Oxford, OUP, 2013), pp.57-68; on machine metaphors in Condorcet's writings, see: Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2002), pp.195-202.

"they ate, and drank, and sat, and walked, loitered and smirked and smiled, and chatter with the easy indifference, that made me stare at their insipidity." There was no "attention in conversation to the crisis" since polite etiquette forbade the discussion of politics at the dining table. The "*nonchalance* that is natural to people of fashion from long habit" had prohibited the aristocracy from confronting the significance of "the present moment, which is beyond all question the most critical that France has seen from the foundation of the monarchy." Four days later, as events gathered pace, the contrasting temporalities within and without the court reached a climax. "Every hour that passes seems to give the people fresh spirit," Young wrote, yet the "supineness, and even stupidity of the court, is without example: the moment demands the greatest decision…"[153]

The temporal consciousness of the ancien regime, for so long cocooned from the unforeseen or unexpected, seemed incapable of comprehending, let alone combatting, the advancing crisis. Yet the onset of crisis was, in part, a consequence of this temporal consciousness, for as the financial and political questions confronting the crown acquired unexpected historical significance, the ancien regime procrastinated.[154] According to the comte de Maurepas, chief minister to Louis XVI until 1781, royal government was assailed by what he termed "temporisation." Daily decisions were delayed or deferred by the total absence of determination or urgency at the centre of the state. "Whoever the ministers are, all the force of government can only come from the king," Maurepas remarked in 1777: "Ours deforms itself every day […] and I am not alone in remarking upon it, because other ministers have said as much to me." The operation of the royal will seemed like a merely reflexive action: "If I have his entire trust, it is by a continuity of habit," the chief minister complained, "not by the force of reason or character."[155] As governance became an increasingly perfunctory, even automatic process, the mechanics of the Absolutist state began juddering to a halt. As early as August 1774, when Maurepas confronted Louis over the matter of the dismissal of the controversial finance ministers Maupeou and Terray, the king stalled. Having already dithered for more than a month, Maurepas remarked that it was now, "a question of your honour." "[I]f you do not want to retain your ministers, declare it…" "Yes," Louis

[153] Young, *Travels*, pp.131, 136.
[154] Procrastination at court led the nobility to seek distraction, which, in 1783, came in the form of the Montgolfier brothers demonstrating their hot-air balloon: Jules Duhem, *Histoire des idées aéronautiques avant Montgolfier* (Paris, Fernand Sorlot, 1943); Awen A. M. Coley, 'Followers of Daedalus: Science and Other Influences in the Tales of Flight in Eighteenth-Century French Literature,' *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 371 (1999), pp.81-173; see, the anonymously written, *Lettre à Mr. M. de Saint-Just, sur le globe aërostatique de MM. Montgolfier* (Paris, Mérigot, 1783).
[155] Véri, *Journal*, II, p.66: "la temporisation," "Quels que soient les ministres, toute la force d'un gouvernement ne peut venir que du roi. Le nôtre se déforme tous les jours au lieu d'acquérir…L'événement me prouve le contraire et je ne suis pas le seul à le remarquer, car d'autres ministres me l'ont pareillement observé. Si j'ai encore sa confiance entière, c'est par une continuité d'habitude et de médiocrité et non par une force de raison et de caractère."

replied, "I have decided to change them," before adding that it would "be this Saturday, after the conseil des dépêches." At this further expression of hesitation, the minister erupted:

> No, this will not do, sire, this is not how one governs a state! Time, I repeat, is not a commodity you can squander at whim! You have already lost too much of it for the good of affairs. And you must make a decision before I leave here.[156]

Like a scolded schoolboy, Louis duly dismissed his ministers, and the Parlements – suspended under Louis XV – were reinstated.[157] This brought about a brief revival of royal activity, and Louis engaged seriously in discussions relative to the recall of the recalcitrant law courts; but, as Véri noted, when they were concluded, "boredom appeared to overcome him."[158] It is unsurprising, of course, that Louis should have regarded time as merely a "commodity." In the context of the endless socio-cultural rhythms of Versailles, time was plentiful, even inexhaustible. It was a routine possibility for the king to delay daily decision-making because, beyond the declaration of war or the observance of state ceremonials, daily life seemed to possess no global-historical significance.

Temporisation, then, was more than a consequence of the languid royal temperament: the entire political culture of Versailles – from court to *conseil* – seemed to preclude the prompt exercise of power. When Louis appointed Anne-Robert Turgot as Controller-General in 1775, the excitable reformist told the king that, "ten years from now your nation [will] be unrecognizable…and infinitely superior to all other peoples past and present."[159] Yet even Turgot, who eagerly pursued "the rapid operations of administration, of which speed and accuracy most often achieve merit and effect," succumbed to the ponderousness of royal government. Turgot was soon reduced to dithering over court protocol, and, according to the intendant des finances, the marquis d'Ormesson, would often "hesitate for whole hours on a simple procedure of letters."[160] There was, then, a haphazard overlap between the historically

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[156] Véri, *Journal*, I, p.185: "'Si vous voulez conserver vos ministres, publiez-le. […] Si vous ne voulez pas les garder, dites-le, pareillement et nommez les successeurs.' 'Oui je suis décidé à les changer, dit le Roi. Ce sera samedi, après le conseil des dépêches.' 'Non, point du tout, Sire, reprit le ministre avec assez de vivacité! Ce n'est pas ainsi qu'on gouverne un État! Le temps, je le répète, n'est pas un bien que vous puissiez perdre à votre fantaisie. Vous en avez déjà trop perdu pour le bien des affaires. Et il faut donner votre décision avant que je sorte d'ici.'"

[157] On the historical consciousness of the parlements as well as the ancien regime more generally, see William Doyle, 'The Parlements,' and Jean Starobinski, 'Éloquence antique, eloquence future: aspects d'un lieu commun d'ancien régime,' in Baker, ed., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, I, pp.157-67 and 311-29.

[158] Ibid, p.244: "L'ennui a paru le regagner"

[159] Anne-Robert Turgot, 'Memorandum on local government,' in Keith M. Baker, ed., *The Old Regime and the French Revolution* (Chicago, IL. University of Chicago Press, 1987), p.102.

[160] Cited in Jean-François Solnon, *Ormesson: au plaisir de l'État* (Paris, Arthème Fayard, 1992), p.281; according to Mercy-d'Argenteau, royal ministers – and Loménie de Brienne in particular – were often criticised for "spending too much time over petty details without seeming to grasp the large contours of affairs": cited in Robert D. Harris, *Necker and the Revolution of 1789* (Lanham, MD., University Press of America, 1986), p.237; Donald Dakin writes that, whilst Turgot "was moving slowly and surely," he was also "moving too fast for those who did not want to move at all. The pace that he wished to set was determined by his own abilities and by the

significant – the administration of state finances, for example – and the temporally banal – such as the rigid observance of court tradition. This made it difficult to identify the relative historical magnitudes of political events. Later, when the National Assembly began drawing up a new constitution in 1790, the magistrate Duval d'Emprémesnil sought to reassure his fretful fellow *monarchiens*: "It will all end with a decree of *parlement*," he confidently claimed, "just wait and see."[161] By portraying the process as intelligible within the expectations of past experience, d'Emprémesnil failed to identify – or perhaps chose to wilfully ignore – the *historical* significance of the situation. Waiting would allow the transitory political excitement to pass, and enable a predictable course of events to resume. Four years later, d'Emprémesnil found himself before the Revolutionary Tribunal, awaiting execution on charges of counterrevolution.[162] The crisis in which the monarchy found itself after 1790, and which intensified until its abolition, would not end with a decree of *parlement*. Nor, however, did it suddenly begin in 1789. The vision of time as a plentiful "commodity" underwent rapid devaluation as the health of royal finances deteriorated – a situation that had become serious by 1786, if not before.

In ancien regime France, debt structured the relationship between time and royal finance. The class of *rentiers* and *financiers*, for example, who regularly financed government borrowing, were enveloped within extensive and durable temporal relationships sustained by credit transactions and debt obligations. Financial calculation was premised upon intuition and experience, bolstered by a common expectation that the future would resemble the past, and that investment outcomes could, to some extent, be predicted. These financial predictive powers were anchored by credit, a concept that blurred the distinction between money borrowed and social cache. When Jacques Necker, the intermittent French finance minister, held a party during the 1780s, for example, one attendee noted that, "this celebration brought him more credit, favour and stability than all his financial operations." These forms of credit also possessed distinct, yet interactive temporalities. "People only spoke for a day about his latest arrangement concerning the *vingtième*, while they are still talking at this moment of the party he gave."[163] In terms of debt-trust relationships, the greater the social standing of the investor, the greater the capacity to acquire monetary credit, and, consequently, the greater the duration of time allotted in the expectation of repayment upon that debt. For many noble families, the timescale of debt amelioration could continue for decades, and whilst a shortage of social credit naturally minimised the repayment window, even the poorest could defer their

administrative machine that he handled": *Turgot and the Ancien Régime in France* (London, Methuen & Co, 1939), p.254.

[161] D'Emprémesnil, cited in Roland E. Mousnier, *The Institutions of France under the Absolute Monarchy, 1598-1789. The Organs of State and Society* (trans. Arthur Goldhammer), (2 vols., Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1984), II, p.655.

[162] By that time, time itself had changed: d'Emprémesnil would go to the guillotine on 3 floréal, Year III.

[163] Cited in Elias, *The Court Society*, p.87.

debts for years. Debt obligations therefore stretched far into the past and often continued for generations into the future, stabilising socio-financial relations over time.[164] When uncertainty arose, of course, payment schedules could be curtailed, debts abruptly recalled and bankruptcies declared. Although unanticipated, credit crises under the ancien regime were often alleviated through debt default or repudiation, the public burden of which could be borne by the immense social credit of the crown. The market could sustain confidence in royal finances since, as the volcanologist and diplomat, Jean-Louis Giraud-Soulavie, observed, the lending practices of the *financers* were so closely "tied to the maintenance of the machine."[165]

Following the last partial default of the French monarchy in 1770, the *rentier* class had expanded enormously – a consequence of the extended borrowing programmes that underwrote the American war effort. The prospect of bankruptcy therefore entailed financial ruin for a growing pool of government investors, which made it politically difficult for the government itself. After the ascension of Louis XVI default was decisively ruled out, a tacit acknowledgment that the damage done to the social credit of the crown by the defeat of the Seven Years' War – and the Maupeou reforms that followed it – had also weakened its financial credit capacity.[166] In 1774 the expenditure cycle of ancien regime fiscal policy was interrupted: where once the monarchy had borrowed to fund war, struggled to increase tax revenues to meet debt obligations, borrowed yet more to service its debt, and finally defaulted in order to restore budgetary equilibrium, it would henceforth turn its face against bankruptcy.[167] It was no longer feasible to perpetuate the traditional rhythms of raising revenue for even ordinary government expenditure. Levying taxes incurred the ire of the revived parlements and encouraged charges of ministerial despotism; defaulting on debt raised the prospect of the historical degradation of the ancient constitution. The functional social capital of monarchical *gloire* was therefore perceived to have diminished as royal indebtedness expanded, a situation made graphically real in 1787 when financial liability prevented the crown from lending support to the patriotic cause in the Netherlands.[168]

As a repetition of previous defaults became politically sensitive, strict schedules of debt repayment began exerting unfamiliar temporal pressures. According to Jacques Pierre

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[164] Rebecca L. Spang, *Stuff and Money in the time of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2015), pp.44-55.
[165] John Hardman, *Overture to Revolution: The 1787 Assembly of Notables and the Crisis of France's Old Regime* (Oxford, OUP, 2010), p.11.
[166] Durand Echeverria, *The Maupoeu Revolution: A Study in the History of Libertarianism, France, 1770-1774* (Baton Rouge, LA., Louisiana State University Press, 1985), pp.127-39; William Doyle, *The Parlement of Bordeaux and the End of the Old Regime, 1771-1790* (New York, NY., St. Martin's Press, 1974).
[167] François R. Velde, David R. Weir, 'The Financial Market and Government Debt Policy in France, 1746-1793,' *The Journal of Economic History* 52 (No.1, 1992), pp.1-39, p.8; on the fiscal malaise more generally, see: J. F. Bosher, *French Finances: From Business to Bureaucracy* (Cambridge, CUP, 1970).
[168] Orville Theodore Murphy, *Charles Gravier, comte de Vergennes: French Diplomacy in the Age of Revolution, 1717-1787* (Albany, NY., State University of New York Press, 1982), p.459-72.

Brissot, future luminary of the French Republic, the "only way to plug the enormous deficit that terrifies us," was for France to "disengage herself from all those foreign interests" – as she had done during the Dutch crisis – "which have cost her so much blood, so much treasure, and her tranquillity." By eradicating her debts and averting default, France would "repair all the interior ills caused by the erroneous system of past centuries." Such regeneration, however, was time sensitive: failure to reform royal finance would not, as in the past, occasion temporary bankruptcy; financial collapse would now presage a disintegration of the monarchy itself. Downgrading the social credit of the crown, Brissot warned, was "the only way to gain enough time to reform all the branches of administration."[169] Of course, retrenchment on this scale would require a kind of devaluation of the monarchy itself.[170] It likewise injected the political economy of the ancien regime with a radical urgency entirely incompatible with the traditional political processes of the crown.[171]

With tactical bankruptcy no longer viable, the king turned towards the money markets, and, like a reluctant gambler, ceded much of his financial future to their unpredictable operation. Unlike England, which had bound the fiscal state in perpetuity to its creditors, France took the decision to automatically amortize government debt over time. After the Seven Years' War, the French state became increasingly dependent upon *rentes viagères*, or lifetime annuities, a fiscal instrument that raised short-term capital from investors in exchange for a semi-annual percentile return on the original lump-sum loan.[172] In contrast to *rentes perpetuélles*, lifetime annuities were finite and expired with the investor, or designated "head," at the moment of death.[173] Whilst *rentes viagères* prioritised redemption of principal, and may therefore have seemed like a useful method of precipitating budgetary balance, they further undermined the long-term debt relations upon which the temporal stability of ancien regime finance was structured. Since the government could no longer predict the duration of its debt repayments, schedules of amortization were reduced to a

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[169] Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, *Point de banqueroute: ou Lettres à un créancier de l'état…* (London, 1788), pp.103-4: "se dégager de tous ces intérêts extérieurs qui lui ont coûté tant de sang, tant de trésors & sa tranquillité, qu'elle va concentrer dans elle-même ses forces & ses richesses, pour réparer tous les maux qu'a causés dans son intérieur le systême [sic] erroné des siècles passés." "C'est au moins le seul moyen de combler cet énorme déficit qui nous épouvante. C'est le seul moyen de se procurer le tems nécessaire pour porter la réforme dans toutes les branches de l'administration."

[170] On royal retrenchment, see: Marcel Marion, *Histoire financière de la France depuis 1715* (6 vols., Paris, Rousseau, 1927-31), I, pp.386-431; Gail Bossenga, *The Politics of Privilege: Old Regime and Revolution in Lille* (Cambridge, CUP, 1991), pp.168-77; on government expenditure and the revenues from the sale of venal offices, see: Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France*, pp.157-8.

[171] Jean-Yves Grenir, *L'Économie d'ancien régime: Une mode de l'échange et de l'incertitude* (Paris, Albin Michel, 1996); Laurence Fontaine, 'Antonio and Shylock: Credit and Trust in France, c.1680-c.1780,' *The Economic History Review* 54 (1, February 2001), pp.39-57.

[172] Gail Bossenga, 'Financial Origins of the French Revolution,' in Thomas E. Kaiser, Dale K. Van Kley, *From Deficit to Deluge: The Origins of the French Revolution* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 2011), pp.37-66, see: p.50-55; on contemporary market speculation, see: George V. Taylor, 'The Paris Bourse on the Eve of the French Revolution, 1781-1789,' *American Historical Review* 67 (4, 1962), pp.951-77.

[173] Spang, *Stuff and Money*, p.20-31; Lorraine Daston, *Classical Probability in the Enlightenment* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1988), pp.112-16.

matter of speculation. This aleatory method of borrowing entailed obvious risk for investors, but the servicing of *rentes viagères* also introduced a destabilising unpredictability into French fiscal forecasts.[174] Far from strengthening market confidence in the crown, lifetime annuities reaffirmed the annual burden of capital repayments. In 1784, Necker concluded that the "wealth of the sovereign" was now almost completely dependent upon fluctuating annual revenues.[175] Meanwhile, the generous yields of lifetime annuities – which were valued at 10%, excessive even by the speculative nature of the investment, and twice the 5% rate of *rentes perpetuélles* – introduced further imbalance between the short-term liabilities of the state and the revenue generated to satisfy them.

Although unpredictable, the repayment schedules of the *rentes viagères* were at least finite. By the 1770s, however, even this was no longer a certainty. The act of splitting the "heads" upon which the *rente* contract depended, a particularly common practice amongst Genevan *financiers*, meant that the annuity could outlive the investor. Young girls, often chosen on the basis of their probable longevity, became the so-called "immortals of Geneva." Many contemporaries viewed this practice as financially ruinous, but the French crown, desperate for quick cash, seemed reluctant to intervene.[176] Indeed, of the fourteen major life annuity loans raised between 1757 and 1787, only three had any age gradations attached to them; the rest were premised upon flat-rate interest formulae, all of which assumed that European demographics had remained largely stable since the late-seventeenth century. This manipulation of the *rentes viagères* was damaging because whilst it extended amortization schedules and exacerbated the unpredictable duration of government loan repayments, the generous yields attached to the loans simultaneously quickened the accumulation of present-value government debt. The sense of urgency this created conditioned both the financial considerations and, consequently, the temporal perceptions of the late ancien regime. The real impact of the *rentes viagères* therefore lay in their subversion of the long-term debt obligations once common to ancien regime financing.

After 1781, the temporal chain connecting the fiscal future to the fiscal past was further fractured by the pressures of war expenditure. Prevented from expanding tax revenues by the intransigence of the parlements, the monarchy sought to cover the costs of warfare through further borrowing – in particular, through a vast expansion of the *rentes viagères*. Necker proposed that interest payments accrued on new debt would be financed by a meantime reduction in domestic expenditures and cutbacks at court. This would result in a

[174] Alexander Engel, 'Buying Time: Futures Trading and Telegraphy in Nineteenth-Century Global Markets,' *Journal of Global History* 10 (2, July 2015), pp.284-306.
[175] Robert D. Harris, *Necker: Reform Statesman of the Ancien Regime* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1979), p.122.
[176] The Genevan girls are discussed in detail by Spang, *Stuff and Money*, p.19-30; see, also, Nina L. Dubin, *Futures & Ruins: Eighteenth Century Paris and the Art of Hubert Robert* (Los Angeles, CA., Getty Research Institute, 2010), pp.61-99.

small surplus in the government budget when war was eventually concluded. Retrenchment, however, required reform, and reform set the monarchy on collision course with the nobility. In 1781, Necker was dismissed – expenditure restraint and any consequent hope of a post-war budget surplus were dismissed with him. In a bid to repair the damage done to court splendour and to restore confidence in crown finances, his successor, Charles-Alexandre de Calonne, primed the pump, writing off royal debts and sanctioning lavish palace renovations.[177] He was particularly determined to see annuity arrears honoured at term, even if timely repayments required further loans with even more burdensome interest rates. But using financial credit to effectively purchase royal credit was a dangerous game. In fact, Calonne had unwittingly bolted the longevity of monarchical *gloire* to the rigid time-scale of government debt repayment, which, if transgressed, would precipitate the instant insolvency of the French crown. From 1783, the court was quite literally living on borrowed time.

As this undisciplined fiscal policy raised the prospect of a permanent peacetime deficit, the present-value borrowing constraint of the crown – at least as it was envisaged by Necker – was violated since the current value of government debt no longer equalled anticipated future surpluses exclusive of interest payments.[178] As long as present expenditure was being resourced by future revenue, the government possessed no firm means of honouring its debt obligations. Averse to default and unable to levy new taxes, Calonne continued to borrow, determined to repay past debts according to inflexible deadlines whilst accumulating even greater future burdens, the growth of which was now entirely unforeseeable. The predicted state of French finances had become a matter of pure speculation. Yet as the deficit continued to grow, the timeframe for repayment shortened. This was partly the result of an over-reliance upon anticipations – the act of borrowing against future tax revenues in order to pay for present expenditure.[179] By 1787, government anticipations had amassed an unprecedented 280m livres. Whilst they were a necessary consequence of the archaic and ponderous administration of ancien regime tax collection, the viability of this system relied upon predictability. The venal officers who administered directed taxes, for example, often deposited less than they collected into treasury coffers on the agreement that they would pay an agreed sum in advance of anticipated revenues, especially on taxes such as the *taille*, since full collection could take up to two years. As the pressures of war expenditure grew, the crown was forced to mortgage state revenues several

[177] François Furet, *Revolutionary France, 1770-1880* (trans. Antonia Nevill), (London, Blackwell Publishing, 1995), pp.38-9.
[178] Eugene Nelson White, 'The French Revolution and the Politics of Government Finance, 1770-1815,' *The Journal of Economic History* 55 (No.2, June 1995), pp.227-55, esp. pp.230-32.
[179] On 5 May 1789, Necker would inform the Estates-General of this extremely high-risk form of finance: "By anticipations is meant that part of the king's revenue consumed in advance…Facility in negotiating and renewing anticipations depends entirely on the maintenance of public credit…[and] one can never be sure, Gentlemen, of renewing them…": Jean Egret*, The French Prerevolution, 1787-1789* (trans. Wesley D. Camp), (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp.182-3.

years in advance. This dependency upon anticipations of increasingly distant future tax receipts had the effect of foreshortening the repayment window of government debt since it widened the gap between ordinary revenue and the capacity of the government to meet annual fixed charges on its debt. The lag-time between tax collection, expected revenues and receipt of anticipations grew whilst the time pressures to meet ever-larger debt obligations shrank. This overwhelmed the monarchy. According to Mercy-d'Argenteau, by the spring of 1788, the king "came each day to the queen's apartments and was so crushed by the conditions in which he found his kingdom that he burst into tears."[180] By late summer, bankruptcy seemed not only inevitable, but imminent.

When the crown was forced into a suspension of payments on 16 August, and to capitulate to calls for the Estates-General, the aggravating factor was a bundle of loans – including the *rentes viagères* – upon which the crown had offered conspicuously high interest rates and which it had committed itself to redeeming in a short period of time, often fewer than 8 years. Finance ministers from Calonne to Brienne pleaded with the parlements and Assembly of Notables to extend the redemption period, but to no avail. Irrespective of their preponderant size, the real importance of the *rentes viagères* – which, by January 1789, were adding an annual interest charge of 101.7 million livres to the royal debt – was in the conditioning of a particular perception of financial time. As government debt seemed to acquire a new urgency, the act of borrowing to meet approaching repayment deadlines appeared to bring about the imbrication of future and present, compressing the temporal experience of the present. "What fatal funds," the comte d'Antraigues later declared, "which present no other purpose than to devour the future!"[181] Of course, a causal chain of crisis that linked financial meltdown and the issuing of life annuities – a position posited by Honoré-Gabriel Mirabeau – may have been "patent nonsense." Yet when Mirabeau condemned government dependence upon life annuity borrowing in general, and Necker's loans of March 1781 in particular, he specified not only the scale but also the speed of issue. The sudden shock of the financial burden created by lifetime annuities was overwhelming the fiscal architecture of the ancien regime. "Note in passing," he remarked, "that it is this ruinous accumulation of two life annuity loans made within only two months of each other & a few weeks before the resignation of M. Necker, that mean one hundred million livres are due to be found at this time in the royal treasury."[182]

It was Mirabeau *père*, Victor de Riqueti, who had earlier condemned *rentes viagères* as a foreclosure upon the future. The practice of government borrowing based upon lifetime

[180] Harris, *Necker and the Revolution of 1789*, p.195.
[181] *AP*, VIII, p.366.
[182] Robert D. Harris, 'Finances and the American War, 1777-1783,' *The Journal of Modern History* 48 (No.2, June 1976), p.233-58, here: p.257.

annuities, he wrote, was little more than an expropriation of future revenues, designed to fund present indebtedness "at the expense of our heirs." This "malign sentiment" was the prefiguration of his fateful phrase, "*après moi le déluge*." Unlike capital investment, which did "not measure its own duration, which carries our firm ideas beyond our own existence," the *rentes viagères* deranged the fiscal relationship between present and future.[183] Successive finance ministers, many of whom had been forced to borrow against future revenues, and often several years in advance, watched as the redemption of principal on lifetime annuities disappeared precipitously into the future, just as the gathering scale of the deficit abbreviated the onset of default. For Mirabeau *père*, it was public credit that fuelled the temptations of indebtedness, heightening the prospect of state bankruptcy, and inciting "the future-orientated speculation" characteristic of the late eighteenth century.[184] For Mirabeau *fils*, the *rentes viagères* modified this deluge mentality, which had emerged after the expensive humiliation of the Seven Years' War, by seeming to accelerate its onset. Once languid but now urgent, debt relations placed the French crown in a race against both historical and real time. The first was experienced as an epochal collapse of royal credit, the second as an almost daily disintegration of governmental financial capacities.[185] The crisis, then, was not eventuated by the scale of government indebtedness, which, though imposing, was insignificant in the context of the eighteenth century. The crisis was occasioned by the temporalisation of government debt.[186] It was the time-scale – not the financial scale – of repayment that would turn philosophical dispute into political panic.

Between the summoning of the Assembly of Notables in 1787 and the convocation of the Estates-General in 1789, the future approached at a torrential pace.[187] With the annual state deficit running in excess of 100m livres and the third and final levy of the *vingtième* due to elapse, as scheduled, in 1787, Calonne performed a complete policy reversal. As austerity replaced profligacy, the controller-general soon realised that to subject any reform package to the delaying tactics of the parlements would be to endanger the existence of monarchy. In the

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[183] Victor Riqueti, marquis de Mirabeau, *Entretiens d'un jeune prince avec son gouverneur, ouvrage divisé en trois…* (4 vols., Paris, 1785), II, p.252: "loin d'être pris aux dépens de nos héritiers," "ne mesure point sa propre durée, qui porte nos idées fort au delà de notre existence."

[184] Michael Sonenscher, *Before the Deluge: Public Debt, Inequality, and the Intellectual Origins of the French Revolution* (Princeton NJ., Princeton University Press, 2007), pp.7-8.

[185] Dubin, *Futures & Ruins*, pp.11-60.

[186] J.G.A. Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time in Eighteenth Century England,' in *Virtue, Commerce, and History: Essays on Political Thought and History, chiefly in the eighteenth-century* (Cambridge, CUP, 1985), pp.91-102.

[187] This period of political crisis is exhaustively outlined by Egret in *The French Prerevolution*; for the financial background to this crisis, see: Eric Nelson White, 'Was there a solution to the ancien régime's financial dilemma?,' *The Journal of Economic History* 49 (No.3, September, 1989), pp.545-68; the baron de Besenval would later remark that the contemporary actors seemed incapable of controlling events: "quelques-uns affligés du présent, effrayés sur l'avenir, mais sans moyens pour arrêter le torrent": *Mémoires du baron de Besenval* (2 vols., Paris, Baudouin frères, 1821), II, p.321; on the Assembly of Notables, see: Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *The Remaking of France: The National Assembly and the Constitution of 1791* (Cambridge, CUP, 1994), pp. 3-32; Vivan R. Gruder, *The Notables and the Nation: The Political Schooling of the French 1787-1788* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2007), pp.11-33.

Assembly of Notables he saw a smoother, speedier means of crisis resolution. He was mistaken. Outraged by the declaration of a deficit, when only several years before Necker had presented a budget surplus, the Notables blocked his package of tax extensions. By confronting them with the imminent prospect of bankruptcy, Calonne may have been seeking to hasten a decisive reform of crown finances. Instead, he merely provoked his own dismissal and disgrace. In April, the financial markets went into free-fall, royal bonds sank precipitously and government anticipations were not renewed. From the office of the controller-general there came reports that, "if all the measures necessary to revive government credit were not effected in the course of the month, there would be no longer any funds and the service could not continue."[188]

Stability was momentarily restored in April 1787 with the appointment of the archbishop of Toulouse, Loménie de Brienne, as finance minister. The opening salvos of the Assembly of Notables had nevertheless extended the sense of urgency beyond the confines of the *conseil du roi* to the wider ancien regime. Retrenchment in the royal household – firmly back on the agenda under the Brienne ministry – was altering the languid pace of life at court and reinforcing the disconnect between fiscal urgency and the temporal experience of Versailles. When the duc de Coigny had his stables forcibly downsized, an indignant baron de Besenval complained to the queen: "It is frightful to live in a country where one cannot be sure of possessing tomorrow what he owns today."[189] Noble privileges, established over centuries and enjoyed for generations, were suddenly consumed in an accelerating programme of retrenchment. When Brienne was finally prevailed upon to call the Estates-General, he temporised. By offering no definite date for its convocation, but instead stating that it would meet no later than 1792, he calculated that time would ameliorate the financial crisis. Extraordinary annual expenditures such as extant loan repayments were predicted to ease after 1790, whilst domestic savings were projected to return an annual estimate of 50m livres to the treasury. The Estates-General would therefore meet at a moment when the potential for political explosion would have decreased in proportion to the improved financial outlook. In the preamble to *Edits du mois de novembre 1787*, the king declared his desire "to reach without shocks and crisis…that era which cannot be far distant, that must inevitably restore the balance between revenue and expenses."[190] As the financial credit of the crown slowly readjusted itself, so the monarchy would regain political influence by acquiring more time in which to deliberate on financial reform. This was a remarkable gamble. The temporality of the crisis now moved centre stage: an aghast Marie-Antoinette wrote to her

[188] Egret, *The French Prerevolution*, pp.28-9.
[189] Ibid, p.43.
[190] Louis XVI, 'Edit du mois de novembre 1787, portant création d'Emprunts graduels & successifs pendant cinq ans,' in *Mercure de France* (No.18, 3 November, 1787), (Paris, rue des Poitevins, 1787) p.82.

brother, Joseph II, arguing that if the king chose to "forestall any direct demand" for the Estates-General, if he should "take his own measures, and make himself master of time, he could inhibit the risks [*les inconvénients*] of these assemblies."[191]

In November 1787, in exchange for vague promises to convene the Estates-General, Brienne had successfully forced the registration of a substantial loan. It was raised in vain. Nine months later, and with almost half of all government tax receipts mortgaged by anticipations, repayments shuddered to a halt. The demands of ordinary present expenditures had eaten so far into projected revenues that, in August 1788, the future arrived at an overwhelming speed. In a casual admission of insolvency, the inept *premier commis* to the

Fig. 3. 'Le Tems donnant les cendres à la noblesse et au clergé: le Tems après avoir pris des cendres sur l'autel de la patrie ou sont brulés et brulent encore les titres de noblesse les privilèges et les vieux parchemins…' (1790) http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40249200c

treasury, Achille-Joseph Gojard, declared that government coffers were empty. Fewer than half a million francs – or, "enough money for state expenses for a quarter of a day," as the *économiste* Pierre Samuel du Pont de Nemours later noted – was all that remained.[192] Debt repayments had even begun to consume the money set aside for relieving provinces damaged

[191] Marie-Antoinette to Joseph II (23 November, 1788), their letter is cited in Florimond de Mercy-Argenteau, *Correspondance secrète du comte de Mercy-Argenteau avec l'Empereur Joseph II et le prince de Kauntiz* (eds., A. Ritter von Arneth, Jules Flammermont), (2 vols., Paris, l'Imprimerie nationale, 1889-1891), II, p.141: "Ce qui me fait beaucoup de peine, c'est que le Roi a annoncé qu'il tiendrait les États généraux d'ici à cinq ans. Il y a sur ce point une fermentation générale et telle qu'on a cru que le Roi devait prévenir une demande directe et qu'en prenant ses mesures et se rendant maître du temps, il pourrait empêcher les inconvénients de ces assemblées."
[192] Du Pont de Nemours, cited in Egret, *French Prerevolution*, p.184.

by hailstorms. Royal credit had evaporated. The convocation of the Estates-General was hastily brought forward and slated for 1 May, 1789. In the margins of a memorandum prepared for the Notables, Brienne later lamented the inability of his ministry to decelerate crisis. If reform had been granted on "the bases I then provided," there "would have been less trouble." "The future generation might have gained less in the end," he scribbled, "but the present one would have had more peace, fewer shocks, less pain. Perhaps even little by little what has been established abruptly might have been introduced slowly, without upheavals." It was the failure of the ancien regime to absorb the novel temporal pressures of the financial crisis that had allowed the radical, uncontrolled restructuring of historical time to ensue: "there was no way at the time of thinking about what has happened since," because to prognosticate about the ways in which events subsequently transpired "would have been considered impossible."[193]

Brienne had gambled and lost. Necker was now recalled for one final throw of the dice. "If I could only have had the fifteen months of the archbishop," he later lamented: "now it is very late."[194] The new debt-time urgency of the crisis had unveiled an entirely open future, completely unmoored from the expectations of past experience. According to Dominique-Joseph Garat, a deputy from Labourd, by granting an assembly of the Estates-General the monarchy had "entered and advanced down pathways [*les routes*] where one could not see any trace of centuries" [Fig. 3].[195] The royal government was now behaving in ways unfamiliar even to itself; it was reaching decisions that, in ordinary times, it would never have countenanced. Whilst the opportunity cost of convening the Estates-General would prove colossal, the option of further hesitation – of buying time by borrowing yet more money in increasingly unfavourable circumstances – may have proved instantly fatal. It was Franklin who, in his *Advice to a Young Tradesman* (1748), had asserted that "time is money."[196] By May 1789, the French king had run out of both.

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[193] Brienne, cited in Egret, p.216.
[194] On the ways in which Necker's financial statements informed the nature of public discourse and political rhetoric, see: Jacob Soll, 'Jacques Necker's *Compte rendu* (1781) and the Origins of Modern Political Rhetoric,' *Representations* 134 (1, Spring, 2016), pp.29-63.
[195] Dominique-Joseph Garat, *Mémoires historiques sur la vie de M. Suard, sur ses écrits et sur le XVIIIe siècle* (2 vols., Paris, 1820), I, p.204: "d'entrer et d'avancer dans les routes où on ne voyait aucune trace des siècles."
[196] In America, meanwhile, the relationship between financial and temporal expenditure had become cast iron. In a letter to Valentine Crawford, dated 30 March, 1774, George Washington wrote: "as you are now receiving my Money, your time is not your own; and that every day or hour misapplied, is a loss to me…": Twohig, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*, X, p.18.

The crisis that engulfed pre-revolutionary political authority in France is indissociable from the crisis of pre-revolutionary historical time. With the convocation of the Estates-General, which had not been summoned into being since 1614, the principle of continuity was sacrificed to contingency. Paradoxically, it was the anachronistic attributes of the assembly – the unfamiliarity of its composition and operation, the incoherence of the demands contained within the *cahiers de doléances* – that made the content of its future deliberations seem so potentially unpredictable.[197] It was to be "made up of so many peasants used to feudalism," remarked Mirabeau, and "so many townsfolk thinking only of money," that "one would tremble if the opening of the Estates put them in the same chamber with our lords of all kinds."[198] Without the bulwark of historically-entrenched institutions, the limitations on political imagination were lifted. This process was experienced as a form of collective historical exhilaration, in which the sensation of acceleration effaced that of boredom, unveiling the unbounded possibilities of human historical agency. Consequently, as the Bastille was plundered on 14 July 1789, time intervened in history. "One is struck with wonder," wrote the Russian minister plenipotentiary to Paris, Ivan Simolin, "in considering that, within the space of thirty-six hours, the French monarchy is annihilated," and the king "reduced to subscribing to everything a frantic, cruel and barbarous people demand with an insolence and an imperative tone…"[199] The historically significant (the "annihilation" of the monarchy) was compressed into the temporally truncated (into "thirty-six hours" of popular violence): the disjuncture in the experience of historical time emerged from the disintegration in the legitimacy, and basic functionality, of regal authority. It was the imperviousness of the ancien regime, and the French crown in particular, to the temporality of the gathering political and financial crises that robbed it of its capacity for timely action.

[197] The prevalence of contingency is contextualised within the history of the late ancien regime by Keith Michael Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution: Essays on French Political Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, CUP, 1990), pp.31-58; on the blizzard of conflicting complaints and demands contained within the *cahiers*, see: Gilbert Shapiro, Timothy Tackett, Philip Dawson, John Markoff, eds., *Revolutionary Demands: A Content Analysis of the Cahiers de Doléances of 1789* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1998), pp.253-79, 280-96; Philippe Grateau, *Les cahiers de doléances: une relecture culturelle* (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2001), *passim.*

[198] Egret, *The French Prerevolution*, p.205.

[199] Ivan Simolin to the comte d'Ostermann (8-19 July 1789), in Feuillet de Conche, ed., *Louis XVI, Marie-Antoinette et Madame Élisabeth, lettres et document inédits*, I, p.479-80: "On est frappé d'étonnement en considérant que, dans l'espace de trente-six heures, la Monarchie françoise est anéantie, et son chef réduit à souscrire à tout ce qu'un peuple effréné, cruel et barbare, exige avec insolence et d'un ton impératif, fort heureux encore qu'il veuille se contenter du sacrifice de son autorité et se des droits."

2: Revolutionary Deliberation and Temporal Pressures: from the Continental Congress, 1774-1776, to the National Assembly, May-October 1789

"The French National Assembly did not mean to go as far as they did," observed the Mainz radical, Georg Forster, in 1791: what "compelled them," was "the iron necessity of time." Revolution made time a force of history.[200] This process might best be understood as the divergence between *chronos* and *kairos*. In contrast to *chronos*, which connotes the measurement of time, *kairos* refers to the qualitative, experiential dimension of time, to the special moments of deliberation, decision-making, and historical action.[201] As the medium of temporal perception, *kairos* is open to manipulation. By foregrounding the kairotic qualities of revolution, this chapter situates the unfamiliar experiences of historical time that accompanied the onset of revolution as a determining factor in revolutionary decision-making.

For Forster, who journeyed to Paris in 1793 to observe he advent of the Jacobin Republic, what "compelled" the National Assembly was not merely the *chronos* of what he perceived to be the pace of Enlightenment progress – to the "boast of reason," the "rights of men," and "metaphysical theories" that were "now at hand" – but to the *kairos* of fleeting opportunity, to the pressure – "the iron necessity" – of an ever-shrinking moment of action.[202] The kairotic power of lived revolutionary history – the way in which chronological assumptions were temporalised, how centuries of change could seem squeezed into the hours of a single afternoon – directly influenced the processes of revolutionary deliberation. "As soon as arms were taken up, as soon the first drop of blood was spilt," remarked the abbé Raynal in his worldwide best-seller, *Révolution de l'Amérique* (1781), "the time of discussion is no more." As news begins to circulate in 1774 that the British are preparing to place Boston harbour under martial order, "dispositions to a general insurrection augment," writes Raynal, who frames collective deliberation characteristic of the American Revolution within a simultaneously ongoing and truncating present: "Soon the disquiet communicates itself from

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[200] "Time is no longer simply the medium in which all histories take place," observes Koselleck, "it gains a historical quality. Consequently, history no longer occurs in, but through, time. Time becomes a dynamic and historical force in its own right": *Futures Past*, p.236; see, also: Perovic, *The Calendar*, p.180-82.

[201] See: John E. Smith, 'Time, Times, and the "Right Time"; *Chronos* and *Kairos*,' *The Monist* 53 (1, January 1969), pp.1-13; Kimberley Hutchings defines the difference between *chronos* as the medium for existence and action, and *kairos* as the "creative force" of temporal action: *Time and World Politics: Thinking the Present* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008), p.25; Sanja Perovic, 'Year I and Year 61 of the French Revolution: The Revolutionary Calendar and Auguste Comte,' in Lorenz, Bevernage, eds., *Breaking Up Time*, pp.87-108, see: p.87-88; Arno Borst, *The Ordering of Time: From the Ancient Computus to the Modern Computer* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1994).

[202] Georg Forster, 'Geschichte der Englischen Literatur,' *Annalen der Britischen Geschichte* 5 (1791), pp.184-314, here: p.242: "Die National Vers sammlung hat nicht daran gedacht, so weit zu geshen, wie sie gegangen ist; aber die eiserne Roths wendigkeit der Zeit und der Umstande hat sie ges zwungen. Der Stolz der Bernunst mit seiner Gleichheit, seinen Rechten der Menschheit, seinen metaphysischen Theorien ist jezt an die Reihe ges kommen." I am grateful to Jonathan Green for alerting me to this source. On Forster's exportation of revolutionary reform, see: Thomas P. Saine, *Georg Forster* (New York, Twayne Publishers, 1972), pp.135-48.

one house to the next," as "the inhabitants assemble and converse in public places." "Here, finally, the time of an important revolution has arrived, the outcome [*événement*] of which, happy or fatal, will forever fix the regret or admiration of posterity."

With *chronos* subjected to *kairos*, the present became saturated with historically charged potentialities. "One day has borne a revolution," surmised Raynal: "One day has transported us into a new century."[203] Such experiences produced a variety of response mechanisms, from the sensation of temporal claustrophobia prevalent at the Continental Congress, to the paralysing experience of synchronicity – of "pile-up" – that assailed the National Assembly during the hot summer months of 1789. This chapter therefore contends that the early stages of the American and French Revolutions did not merely contribute to alterations in the perceptions of historical time; they proceeded as they did because of those alterations.[204]

I. Year(s) I

Almost two decades before the Jacobin Republic formally redrew time – when Gilbert Romme and Fabre d'Églantine finalised the republican calendar, replacing the months of the year with natural allegory, from the summer heat of Thermidor to the autumnal fog of Brumaire, – the almanac authors of the American Republic were, in an admittedly less systematic way, realigning human time in accordance with the political rupture of revolution.[205] One of the most widely circulated almanacs of the early Republic was

[203] Guillaume-Thomas-François, l'abbé Raynal, *Révolution de l'Amérique* (London, Lockier Davis, 1781), pp.84: "Dès qu'on a pris les armes, dès que la première goutte de sang a coulé, le temps des discussion n'est plus," pp.28-29: "Ces dispositions à un soulèvement général sont augmenté par l'acte contre Boston." "Bientôt l'inquiétude se communique d'une maison à l'autre. Les citoyens se rassemblent & conversent dans les places publiques." "La voilà enfin arrivée cette époque d'une révolution importante, dont l'événement heureux ou funeste fixera à jamais les regrets ou l'admiration de la postérité. Serons-nous libres, serons-nous esclaves? C'est de la solution de ce grand problême que va dépendre, pour le présent, le sort de trois millions d'hommes, & pour l'avenir la félicité ou la misère de leurs innombrables descendans." Raynal discusses the intense *kairos* of the period 1774-1776, pp.91, 92, 93: "C'est le temps de l'énergie & de la vigueur." "Le moment est venu. Plus tard, elle seroit abandonnée à un avenir incertain & aux caprices du hasard." "Peu de nations on saisi le moment favorable pour se faire un gouvernement. Une fois échappé, ce moment ne revient plus; & l'on en est puni pendant des siècles par l'anarchie ou l'esclavage," p.85: "Un jour a fait naître une révolution. Une jour nous a transporté dans un siècle nouveau." On *Révolution de l'Amérique* as worldwide best-seller, see: Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (New York, NY., W.W. Norton, 1996), pp.30, 34-35, 48-49; on Raynal's reception, both contemporary and current, see: Cecil Courtney, Jenny Mander, 'Introduction,' in Cecil Courtney, Jenny Mander, eds., *Raynal's Histoire des Deux Indes: Colonialism, Networks and Global Exchange* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2015), pp.1-18.

[204] William H. Sewell Jr., 'Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille,' in Sewell, *Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2005), pp.225-70.

[205] Calendrical experimentation was a source of fascination for French revolutionaries: in 1788, the radical playwright Sylvain Maréchal published his *Almanach des honnêtes gens*, in which he overhauled the Gregorian calendar by stripping away all Christian iconography and inaugurating a Year I of Reason; in 1790, *Le Catéchisme de curé Meslier*, a Parisian almanac, acclaimed the fall of Bastille as the beginning of the Year I of Liberty; see: Perovic, *The Calendar*, ch.1 and ch.2.

Nathanael Low's *Astronomical Diary*, published in Boston. In his first edition following the Declaration of Independence, Low announced that 1777 was no longer "the seventeenth in the reign of George III;" rather, it would henceforth be remembered as "the First Year of American independence, which began *July fourth*, 1776."[206] Separation from the British Empire had not only precipitated a revolutionary war but also a rupture in American chronology: alongside its religious demarcation – "the Year of the Christian Era, 1777" – American history was now also calculable according to the unfolding time of human events.

In reforming their chronological nomenclature, numerous almanacs, north and south, followed suit. This new system proved resilient, even as the historical moment of Independence receded into the past. In his *New-England Almanack* of 1784, Isaac Bickerstaff hailed the year as "the Eighth of American Independence," a new epoch, he observed, "which commenced July 4, 1776."[207] As late as 1790, *Ellicott's Maryland and Virginia Almanac* perpetuated the practice, declaring "the Fourteenth Year of American Independence."[208] Indeed, when the first Congress under the Constitution met in Philadelphia, its legal register [Fig.2] announced that it had done so in the year 1789, "and of the Independence of the

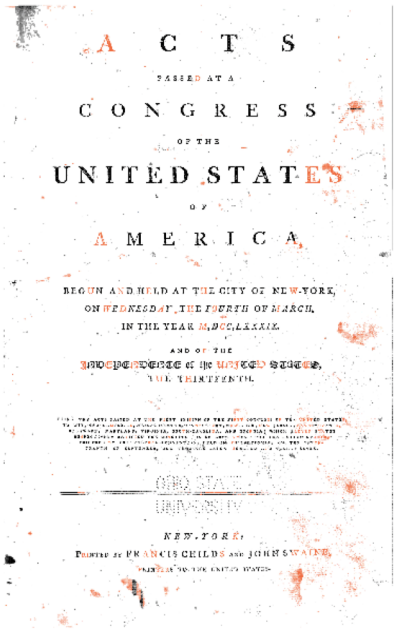

Fig. 4. 'Acts Passed at a Congress of the United States, begun and held at the city of New York on Wednesday the Fourth of March, in the year 1789, and the thirteenth of independence' (1789)

United States, the Thirteenth." If almanac literature was central to the construction of an

[206] Nathanael Low, *An Astronomic Diary; Or, Almanack for the Year of Christian Era, 1777, and the first year of American Independence, which began* July fourth*, 1776* (Boston, MA., published by Kneeland and Adams, 1776).
[207] Isaac Bickerstaff, *The New-England Almanack; or, Lady's and Gentlemen's Diary, for the Year of our Lord Christ, 1784…and the Eighth of American Independence* (published by John Carter, Providence, RI., 1783).
[208] *Ellicott's Maryland and Virginia Almanac, and Epheremis, for the Year of our Lord 1790…and the Fourteenth Year of American Independence* (published by John Hayes, Baltimore, 1789).

emergent American identity, then they were also pivotal in producing an American appreciation of historical time.[209] Since the early seventeenth century, the almanac was a common feature to every colonial household, rivalling only the Bible for shelf-space. Containing calendars, astronomical prognostications, and proverbial or even political pronouncements, almanacs helped coordinate festive and civic life, and in the process created a common sense of time.

Since the start of the imperial crisis, many almanacs began publishing calendars that cited the major dates of dispute – from the repeal of the Stamp Act in 1765, to the Boston Massacre of 1770, and eventually the Battles of Lexington and Concord in 1775 – as the essential chronological parameters of a new, politicised American identity.[210] This Americanization of commemoration competed with a more traditional demarcation of colonial history, which had hitherto unfolded according to a regnal dating system. The colonies, now a self-consciously operating body of united independent states, were detached from British authority because they no longer chronologically cohered to the "time" of the crown. In pre-revolutionary America, commemorative culture telescoped British oppression, inculcating recently liberated citizens into "a practice of national time" that not only promoted an alternative vision of the future, but a radically revised understanding of the past.[211] The genealogy of the British crown and the chronology of British oppression began to blend on the pages of the almanacs. In 1776, the *Freebetter's New-England Almanack*, published by Nathan Daboll, offered a reinterpretation of regal lineage. Beginning with the present monarch, "George the Third," who was the "grandson of George 2^{d}, the son of George the First, who was cousin to Queen Anne," and "the daughter to King James," the recollection reached back almost a millennium, until it finally concluded with "Henry the 2^{d}, the cousin of Stephen, who was nephew to Henry the First, the son of William the Conqueror, who was a SON OF A WHORE."[212] Despite the elongated set-up, the punch-line was

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[209] Matthew Shaw, 'Keeping Time in the Age of Franklin: Almanacs and the Atlantic World,' *Printing History* 2 (2007), pp.17-37; on French almanacs, see: Lise Andriès, 'Almanacs: Revolutionizing a Traditional Genre,' in Robert Darnton, Daniel Roche, eds., *Revolution in Print: The Press is France 1775-1800* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1989), pp.203-22.

[210] Gregory T. Knouff, *The Soldier's Revolution: Pennsylvanians in Arms and the Forging of Early American Identity* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2004), pp.77-118; Stephen J. Hornsby, Michael Hermann, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Lebanon, NH., University Press of New England, 2005), pp.204-38; Jason Shaffer, *Performing Patriotism: National Identity in the Colonial and Revolutionary American Theater* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), pp.10-29; Denver Brunsman, 'Subjects vs. Citizens: Impressment and Identity in the Anglo-American Atlantic,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 30 (4, Winter 2010), pp.557-86; T. H. Breen, 'Ideology and Nationalism on the Eve of the American Revolution: Revisions *Once More* in Need of Revising,' *Journal of American History* 84 (1, 1996), pp.13-39; Kariann Akemi Yokota, *Unbecoming British: How Revolutionary America became a Postcolonial Nation* (Oxford, OUP, 2011), pp.3-18; on ruptures in loyalist identities, see: Ruma Chopra, *Unnatural Rebellion: Loyalists in New York City during the Revolution* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2011), pp.7-28.

[211] David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The making of American nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 1997), p.45.

[212] Cited in ibid, p.47.

devastating: by inverting the logic of historical heritage, Daboll delegitimised the British crown, depicting its genealogical authority as little more than a reiteration of immorality. Unlike the pristine conception – the *newness* – of the American Republic, the entire lineage of the British monarchy could be characterised as fetid – corrupt at its ancestral core.[213] A restart was essential: American history therefore unfolded from a necessary break point, a Year I of Independence, which, as Low observed, could be calendrically located on "*July fourth*, 1776."

Almanacs that altered their dating systems, like the French republican calendar, testify to the reality of revolutionary rupture, not merely in the measurement of time, but in its lived experience. These artefacts nevertheless fulfilled very different temporal operations. Whilst American almanacs *measured* the historical rupture of Revolution, the calendar sought erroneously to *regulate* it. This was a fundamental error since it was not possible for a calendrical or chronometric artefact to re-impose order on a sensory disruption to historical time. In other words, repairing the rupture in the lived experience of time – what has elsewhere been termed "sentimental time" – could not be achieved with reference to absolute time. As Benjamin Vaughan, a confidant to Franklin, observed in 1795 with respect the course of the American Revolution: "the chronologer has slowly counted months, where the philosopher has computed ages." This *perceived* disjuncture in time and history, whereby "ages" unfolded in mere "months," rendered ordinary units of calendar time meaningless.[214]

The almanacs, unlike the calendar, allowed for a panoramic vision of American history, more observational than regulatory, in which the future could be embraced by means of optimistic prognostication without being undermined by the horror of historical accumulation.[215] As Sanja Perovic has illuminatingly argued, the calendar was never intended to be a gauge of continual rupture, but a device for "framing" linear time, for giving

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[213] Brendan McConville, *The King's Three Faces: The Rise and Fall of Royal America, 1688-1776* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2006), pp.249-312; Eric Nelson, *The Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding* (Cambridge, MA., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), pp.108-145.

[214] It is for this reason that my thesis only sparingly discusses the role of the calendar in the transformations of historical time during the French Revolution; instead, I will focus on a political and cultural reading of temporality and historicity. I am also content to concur with many of the conclusions of Perovic (in particular) as well as Matthew Shaw, *Time and the French Revolution* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2011), and Michael Meinzer, *Der französische Revolutionskalender (1792-1805): Planung, Durchführung und Scheitern einer politischen Zeitrechnung* (Munich, R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1992), on the matter of calendrical reform and its consequences.

[215] Like the Calendar, many of the almanacs also *backdated* the origin of the era of Independence: it was not until 1778, for example, that the *Lancaster Pocket Almanack* reformed its chronology and began carrying "the Third Year of American Independence" upon its masthead, see: Anthony Sharp, *Lancaster Pocket Almanack, For the Year 1778, Being the Third of American Independence, Fitted to the use of Pennsylvania and the neighbouring States* (Philadelphia, PA., printed by Francis Bailey, 1777); Sanja Perovic has argued that the problem of prolepsis, whereby calendrical reformers constantly projected the Revolution's, and then the Republic's, start-point backwards produced overlapping and often incongruous historical timelines: *The Calendar*, pp.87-126; intriguingly, Sharp's almanac of 1778 is the first in which all Christian references to "the Year of our Lord," or the regnal year of the British monarch are effaced: the almanac, despite maintain the year 1778, now exclusively locates itself in time according to the new chronology of American independence; this was not a hard and fast rule: other almanacs, such as William Goddard's *The Pennsylvania, Delware, Maryland, and Virginia Almanack and Ephemeris* (Baltimore, MD., 1787), dated itself according "the Year of our Lord, 1787," as well as "the Eleventh Year of American Independence."

"revolutionary history a semblance of unity it otherwise lacked," and enabling the Revolution "to take into account its own historicity."[216] In fact, it was the temporal violence required to squeeze revolutionary history back into the computational grid of a calendar – an effort that repeatedly buckled under the incursions of momentous events – that provoked, in particular, religious and cultural grievances.[217]

The revolutionaries had more luck in creating a unified time for the Republic by requisitioning church bells, which, after 1792, were melted down to provide material for cannonry and infantry. Like the calendar, this was an essential plank in the programme of Dechristianisation.[218] The Convention, and later the Directory, hoped to free the Republic from the sensory ascendancy of ecclesiastical authority, which regulated the rhythms of rural, Catholic France, and which undermined the civic time of the Republic by providing an alternative temporality. Church bells, after all, did not merely summon congregations to mass; they punctured the temporality of local sound spaces, governing the time of waking, resting, feasting and rejoicing.[219] Repressing and repurposing bells, as Alain Corbin observes, profoundly altered the "auditory environment" of rural France, overhauled "the systems for transmitting information," and ultimately undermined traditional means of telling time.[220] Revolutionary governments achieved far more by tampering with sensory perceptions of time than by instituting the arid *fêtes décadaires* adumbrated by the calendar. Indeed, when the brigadier Nicholas-Joseph Desenfans was assigned in 1799 to inspect the Hautes-Pyrénées, a

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[216] Perovic, *The Calendar*, pp.242-43, 176: "If revolutionary history had come to resemble more a panorama than a calendar, it is because of a growing realization that linear, not cyclical time was the appropriate framework for understanding events. In the absence of a functional calendar, events could be unified as a 'tableau' only by virtue of being continually displaced in linear succession." See: Daniel S. Milo, *Trahir le Temps* (Paris, Société d'édition Les Belles Lettres, 1991), p.195; and Henri Welschinger, *Les Almanachs de la Révolution* (Paris, Librarie des bibliophiles, 1884), p.37: "Parmi les motifs invoqués, en 1793, pour remplacer le calendrier grégorien, nous trouvons la nécessité de créer une nouvelle mesure de la durée, dégagée des erreurs transmises depuis des siècles par une routine superstitieuse, de consacrer l'ère nouvelle de la France et de constituer en même temps un calendrier purement civil qui convînt également à tous les citoyens, sans distinction de culte."

[217] Although it was not officially abolished until 1805, the longevity of the Calendar is deceptive, it was amended repeatedly: before the fall of the Jacobins, the calendar chiefly represented the radical historical newness of the French Republic; under the Directory, it was more vigorously employed as a means of eradicating the remnants of the ancien regime; and only after Thermidor, for example, did the use of *l'ère vulgaire* in printed media became illegal; for the most thorough discussion of the religious and culture disputes it occasioned, see: Michael Meinzer, *Der französische Revolutionskalender*, pp.46-73; Marie-Hélène Froeschlé-Chopard, Michel Froeschlé-Chopard, 'Le calendrier républicain, une nécessité idéologique et/ou scientifique,' and Michael Meinzer, 'Le calendrier révolutionnaire: son application et ses effets sociaux à Marseilles et dans trois villages provençaux,' in Philippe Joutard, dir., *L'espace et le temps reconstruits: La Révolution française, une révolution des mentalités et des cultures? Actes du colloque organisé à Marseilles le 22, 23, et 24 février 1989* (Aix-en-Provence, Presses de l'Hexagone, 1990), pp.169-80, 181-96; Bronislaw Baczko, 'La Révolution mesure son temps,' in Catherine Cardinal, ed., *La Révolution dans la Mesure du Temps : Calendrier Républicain, Heure Décimale, 1793-1805* (Musée International d'Horlogerie, La Chaux-de-Fonds, Suisse, 1989), pp.9-29.

[218] Dale K. Van Kley, 'Christianity as Casualty and Chrysalis of Modernity: The Problem of Dechristianization in the French Revolution,' *The American Historical Review* 108 (4, October 2003), pp.1081-1104.

[219] On late-eighteenth century Italian 'campanilismo' and the disruption of the politics of localism by the French Revolution, see: Mike Rapport, 'Jacobinism from Outside,' in Andress, ed., *The Oxford Handbook to the French Revolution*, pp.503-20, here: p.508.

[220] Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the 19th-Century French Countryside* (trans. Martin Thom), (London, Papermac, 1999), p.21; see, on revolutionary Dechristianisation in a cultural context, Serge Bianchi, *La Révolution culturelle de l'an II: élites et peuple (1789-1799)* (Paris, Aubier, 1982), and Michel Vovelle, *La Révolution contre l'église, de la raison à l'être suprême* (Paris, Éditions Complexe, 1988).

peripheral *département* that had remained largely shielded from the revolutionary assault on ecclesiastical time, it was, he wrote, like journeying back into the past: he was startled to "hear that people were ringing the Angelus, *as if it were twelve years ago*."[221]

The creators of the calendar nevertheless hoped to incorporate the sensory atmosphere of rural and agricultural France. If the months were seasonal, the days were pastoral: the seventh day of the second *décade* of Ventôse, for example, was the day of the elderberry (*sureau*), whilst the eighth day of the first *décade* of Nivôse was – remarkably – the day of manure (*fumier*). This bid to re-naturalize French time was a doomed enterprise. Revolutionary events and conditions no longer adhered to a naturally derived chronology; historical temporalities, as Koselleck identifies, "follow a sequence different from the temporal rhythms given in nature."[222] As the diplomat Charles-Frédéric Reinhard observed in 1791, the expectation-shattering developments of the French Revolution had forced history and nature out of sync:

> The French form of government developed fast and without warning. There were moments in those past two years when it was well-nigh possible to say that the sun shone upon an entirely different nation after only one single turn around the earth.[223]

The "twelve years" cited by Desenfans might have seemed like a millennium, such was the scale of historical compression wrought by revolution. In this sense, it was the speed of political life, not the technological advance characteristic of the nineteenth century, which initially denaturalized the historical space of action. Indeed, the transportation technologies of the subsequent century – in particular, the railway – would make absolute time grids essential. The rupture in "sentimental time" was affected by political revolution, not by technological or industrial change; reordering historical time would therefore necessitate political remedies. All of which further testifies to the calendar's failure to territorialize the multiple temporal textures of France. The rhythm of revolutionary history, its constant kairotic quality, would repeatedly explode the parameters of calendrical, chronological temporality.[224]

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[221] Cited in Corbin, *Village Bells*, p.32; on music, musical temporalities and the French Revolution, see: Herbert, Schneider, 'The sung constitutions of 1792: an essay on propaganda in the Revolutionary song,' in Malcolm Boyd, ed., *Music and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, CUP, 1992), pp.236-276.
[222] Koselleck, 'History, Histories, and Formal Time Structures,' in *Futures Past*, pp.93-104, here: p.96.
[223] Cited in Reinhold Brinkmann, 'In the Time(s) of the "Eroica,"' (trans. Irene Zedlacher), in Scott Burnham, Michael P. Steinberg, eds., *Beethoven and his World* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2000), pp.1-26, here: p.8.
[224] Noah Shusterman, *Religion & the Politics of Time: Holidays in France from Louis XIV through Napoleon* (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), pp.106-205; Perovic, *The Calendar*, pp.175-208; on the continued, clerical administration of pre-revolutionary ecclesiastical time in rural parishes, see: Joseph F. Byrnes, *Priests of the French Revolution: Saints and Renegades in a New Political Era* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2014), pp.158-74.

II. The circulation of speculation

> At the hour,
> The most important of each day, in which
> The public News was read, the fever came,
> A punctual visitant, to shake this Man
>
> 'Twas in truth an hour
> Of universal ferment; mildest men
> Were agitated, and commotions, strife
> Of passion and opinion fill'd the walls
>
> William Wordsworth, *The Prelude*, Book IX (1804-1805)[225]

Revolutionary events broke the news. As William Wordsworth observed, the reception of daily news resembled "earthquakes, shocks repeated day by day." The reportage of the Revolutions, meanwhile, repeatedly referred to the *improbability* of their proceedings.[226] Contemporaries consequently searched for alternative means of comprehending and navigating events: they began to speculate.[227] What emerged was "a period of political paranoia," in which the temporalised experience of history invested "visions of conspiracy" were a new explanatory power. As Gordon Wood notes, in a "political world that was expanding and changing faster than the available rational modes of explanation could handle," and where "outcomes appeared to be disconnected from intentions," rumour rushed to fill the void.[228] There was simply no time to verify information that seemed so pregnant with such imminent possibilities. Time lags began emerging between cause and consequence, between "intentions" and "outcomes," creating delay periods in which the need for historical meaning could only be satisfied by conspiratorial explanation.[229] And when every day seemed

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[225] William Wordsworth, *The Prelude; or Growth of a Poet's Mind*, ed., E. de Selincourt (Oxford, OUP, 1959), 163-9; on Wordsworth's time-consciousness as a reflection of French Revolutionary history, see: Herbert Lindenberger, *On Wordsworth's Prelude* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1963), pp.131-204.

[226] For America, see: Matthew Rainbow Hale, 'On Their Tiptoes: Political Time and Newspapers during the Advent of the Radicalized French Revolution, c.1791-1793,' in *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Summer 2009), pp.191-218; for France, see: Lynn Hunt, 'The World We Have Gained: The Future of the French Revolution,' *The American Historical Review* 108 (1, February 2003), pp.1-19.

[227] As early as October 1789, *Le Courrier de Provence*, could argue that even speculation and rumour held insufficient explanatory power, since the progress of the Revolution repeatedly proved more unbelievable: "It is useless to speculate on the thousands of rumours that have more or less the appearance of truth. […] Recent events are a new proof that, in times of unrest, there is nothing which is unimportant, or trivial in itself. An incident verging on the comic, an impropriety committed by drunken men, a ribbon of a particular colour, can bring about a revolution: a meal given on 1 October by the Royal Bodyguard to the Flanders Regiment has caused the capital to explode": cited in John Thomas Gilchrist, William J. Murray, *The Press in the French Revolution: A Selection of Documents Taken from the Press of the Revolution for the Years 1789-1794* (New York, NY., St. Martin's Press, 1971), p.76.

[228] Gordon S. Wood, 'Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century', *The William and Mary Quarterly* 39 (3, July 1982), pp.401-41, here: p.429.

[229] As Michael Lienesch observes, "the French Revolution had let loose a flood of events that were so earth-shattering and extraordinary as to defy any explanation short of an intricately interconnected conspiracy to

to announce the appearance of new dangers, the need for ready information became imperative – it became a matter of life and death. After all, in the time lag within which speculation might mature into fact, anything could happen: the seemingly epic historical consequences of revolutionary events afforded little waiting time.

A belief in the prevalence of plots was nothing new. The eighteenth century had been dominated by conspiratorial thought: whilst "intentions" were often nefarious, the possible "outcomes" of perceived conspiracy were contained by the regulated information network and the iterative historicity of the absolutist state, which appeared to preclude the unforeseen.[230] One consequence of the municipal transformations of the Revolution, was the institutionalisation of the circulation of partial information, through the sections, clubs and, later, the insurrectionary Commune.[231] Where once rumour and gossip flowed at a steady pace, slowly trickling through court and salon, passing by simple word of mouth, revolutionary rumour was now writ large in the *décrets* of the sections, and impatiently transmitted to the Convention as a matter of extreme urgency.[232] A recently freed press, meanwhile, reproduced – often on the same day and at the speed of the printing press – the idle denunciations overheard on street corners and coffee houses, enrolling an increasingly literate urban population into a rampant economy of rumour.[233]

The experience of revolution exposed this time lag. Conspiracy acquired its special force as a consequence of the cleavage that opened between the speed with which information was disseminated and the tempo of historical events. Living in a time when historically saturated occurrences seemed so rapidly to tumble one after another rendered the unthinkable thinkable, the impossible probable. The entirely unexpected became a constitutive element of everyday experience. This made a willingness to believe in the wildest predictions look like a reasonable psychological procedure for satisfying a need to prepare for every imaginable eventuality.[234] The future was not therefore completely beyond prognostication; rather the

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overturn religion and overthrow good government throughout the world": 'The Illusion of the Illuminati: the counterconspiratorial origins of post-revolutionary Conservatism,' in W. M. Verhoeven, ed., *Revolutionary Histories: Transatlantic Cultural Nationalism, 1775-1815* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp.152-65, here: p.152.

[230] Jack P. Greene, 'Search for Identity: an Interpretation of the Meaning of Selected Patterson of Social Response in Eighteenth-Century America,' *Journal of Social History* 3 (1970), pp.189-200; Jeremy D. Popkin, 'The *Gazette de Leyde* and French Politics Under Louis XVI,' in Jack Richard Censer, ed., *Press and Politics in Pre-Revolutionary France* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1987), pp.75-132.

[231] David Andress, '"Horrible plots and infernal treasons": conspiracy and the urban landscape in the early Revolution,' in Peter R. Campbell Thomas E. Kaiser, Marissa Linton, eds., *Conspiracy in the French Revolution* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2007), pp.85-105, esp. pp.99-102.

[232] On rumour and revolutionary rhetoric, see the indispensable: Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1984), pp.38-45.

[233] As Arthur Young observed in June, 1789, the aptly named periodic press exploded in response to the speed of events: "the business going forward at present in the pamphlet shops of Paris is incredible," he wrote: "I went to the Palais Royal to see what new things were published and to procure a catalogue of all. Every hour produces something new. Thirteen came out today, sixteen yesterday, and ninety-two last week": Young, *Travels*, p.117.

[234] On anxiety and information scarcities during the French Revolution, see: Ouzi Elyada, 'Les récits de complot dans la presse populaire parisienne (1790-1791),' in Harvey Chisick, Ilana Zinguer, Ouzi Elyada, eds., *The Press in the French Revolution* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1991), pp.281-92. Often, when newspaper deliveries failed

experience of revolutionary history – from the fall of the Bastille to the flight of the king – emboldened those who forecasted a future filled with once implausible treachery.[235] Conspiracies therefore offered temporal structure to the apparently structureless nature of history and the orderless appearance of events.

During the American and French Revolutions, conspiracies were constant, though they often lay dormant: their activating agent was rumour, which appeared in order to fill the time lag between specious news and verified information. Rumours are statements that circulate at moments of ambiguity, enabling individuals to comprehend the blurry origins of circumstances, to offer meaning to accelerated history. The concept of "crisis" – as in, *la patrie en danger* or "the times that try men's souls" – derived its political momentum from the banalities of the speed of circulating information, or speculation.[236] Rumour was the temporalisation of non-knowledge.[237] In the early American Republic, gossip satisfied a similar function. The very materiality of the *Anas* testifies to the transience of political rumour – the memoranda that Jefferson kept, scrawled "on loose scraps of paper," often "taken out of my pocket in the moment," were "ragged, rubbed, & scribbled," the hastily jotted records of the fleeting "passions of the time."[238] In a wider, historical sense, political gossip acquired its "urgent" character, explains Joanne Freeman, because it seemingly "disclosed hidden threats to the republic" *before* their actualisation.[239]

As a consequence, the time lag between the initial report of an actual occurrence and the subsequent dissemination of verified information was a fecund period of swirling

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to arrive on time, postal officers were attacked or accused of withholding precious information: Bob Harris, *Politics and the rise of the press: Britain and France, 1620-1800* (London, Routledge, 1996), p.79.

[235] The most obvious example here may be the demands for "five to six hundreds decapitated heads," made as early as 1789 by Jean-Paul Marat, who, as Colin Lucas observes, "was fond of pointing out later that the failure to take this timely action had simply made things worse and increased the amount of necessary violence": Colin Lucas, 'Revolutionary Violence, the People and the Terror', in Keith Michael Baker, ed., *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture* (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1994), IV, pp.57-79, here: p.66; on his his assassination and the elevation of his ideas, see: Guillaume Mazeau, 'Scripting the French Revolution, Inventing the Terror: Marat's Assassination and its Interpretations,' in Baker, Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, pp.131-147.

[236] Paine, 'The Crisis No.I,' in Charles J. Norman, ed., *The Crisis Papers: 1776-1783* (Albany, NY., New College and University Press, 1990), p.1; Reinhardt Koselleck, 'Crisis' (trans. Michaela W. Richter), *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67 (2, April, 2006), pp.357-400.

[237] On the theoretical dimensions of "non-knowledge" as a viable historical approach, see: William O'Reilly, 'Non-Knowledge and Decision Making: The Challenge for the Historian,' in Cornel Zwierlein, ed., *The Dark Side of Knowledge: Histories of Ignorance, 1400 to 1800* (Leiden, Brill, 2016), pp.397-420.

[238] Thomas Jefferson, 'Prefatory Remarks' to *The Anas*, in 'Editorial Note,' in Charles T. Cullen, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (40 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1986), XXII, pp.33-38, here: p.33; Mattew E. Crow, 'History, Politics, and the Self: Jefferson's "Anas" and Autobiography,' in Francis D. Cogliano, *A Companion to Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2012), pp.477-90; on gossip and rumour on the frontier, see: Gregory Evans Dowd, *Groundless: Rumours, Legends and Hoaxes on the Early American Frontier* (Balitmore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015).

[239] Joanne B. Freeman, 'Slander, Poison, Whispers, and Fame: Jefferson's 'Anas' and Political Gossip in the Early Republic,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 15 (1, Spring, 1995), pp.25-57, here: p.30.

rumour.[240] The September Massacres of 1792 are a case in point.[241] In the four days after Paris heard of the fall of Verdun, the battle that saw Prussian forces under the Duke of Brunswick gain an unobstructed pathway to the French capital, all restrictions on the immediate term possibilities of the future were exploded. Since news did not travel at a regularised, predictable pace, it was not clear how much of a headstart the information relating to the battle had upon the pace to the oncoming Prussians. As one observer, Adelaïde Mareux, recorded: "One receives news at every moment," much of it was conflicting, some of it later contradicted; and "[a]s to the affairs of the war," she added, "we do not know what is going to happen."[242] The time available in which to adequately respond to perceived threats was therefore entirely unknown: in the time taken to receive news of the Prussian march, Brunswick might be mere hours from the gates of Paris, ready to enact his "ever memorable vengeance." A disjuncture in the relative temporalities of rumour and verified news had already opened up in late August when Prussian forces successful captured the fortress town of Longwy. Although the French garrison surrendered in the early hours on 23 August, news of the defeat did not circulate amongst Parisians until at least the evening of 26 August.[243] By 29 August, observed Rosalie Jullien, royalists had begun to openly anticipate "the invasion of Paris in fewer than eight days." Whilst frightening, such speculations made no account of the innumerable variables that now infested the near-term future: the marching speed of the Prussian troops, for example, or the fact that the prediction of "eight days" had been made a full seven days after the end of the siege itself.[244]

In a context where events outpaced the circulation of information, rumour moved faster than fact. Fear of imminent Prussian invasion activated the long-standing conspiracy that the prisons of Paris were festooned with plotting priests and aristocrats. Brunswick, it was claimed, planned to let them loose, freeing them to murder and maim their captors. As

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[240] On early modern information networks, see: Robert Darnton, 'An Early Information Society: News and the Media in Eighteenth-Century Paris,' *American Historical Review* 105 (1, February, 2000), pp.1-35; and, *passim*, Brendan Dooley, ed., *The Dissemination of News and the Emergence of Contemporaneity in Early Modern Europe* (Surrey, Ashgate, 2010).

[241] On the practical (and not merely theoretical) relevance of conspiracy to the early French Revolution, see: Timothy Tackett, 'Conspiracy Obsession in a Time of Revolution: French Elites and the Origins of the Terror, 1789-1792,' *The American Historical Review* 105 (3, June, 2000), pp.691-713.

[242] Adelaïde Mareaux, *Une famille de la bourgeoisie parisienne pendant la Révolution d'après leur correspondance inedited* (Louis de Launay, ed., Paris, Perrin et Cie, 1921), p.295: "On nous rapporte des nouvelles à chaque instant…Quant aux affaires de la guerre, on ne sait ce que cela va devenir."

[243] As Jullien observed, news of the defeat was only made official on 26 August; she likewise parroted the rumour that defeat was a consequence of the machinations of the secretive royal cabal, the 'Austrian Committee': "Longwy est pris […] La nouvelle est officielle; mais elle n'est point détaillée. Tout cela sent encore le comité autrichien, qui peut avoir influencé sur cet événement…": Rosalie Jullien, *Journal d'une bourgeoise pendant la Révolution, 1791-1793* (Paris, Calmann-Lévy, 1881), p.261.

[244] As late as 6 September, uncertainty remained rife: "La moitié de Paris assure que Verdun est pris, l'autre moitié soutient que la citadelle tient bon," Jullien, *Journal*, pp.298-9; during the mid-eighteenth century, Frederick the Great had reformed the ability of the Prussian army to march in step, creating battalions formed of thinner columns that, when marching in uniform cadence, could move far quicker than many of their unreformed military counterparts in Europe; see: Elisabeth Krimmer Patricia Anne Simpson, eds., *Enlightened War: German Theories and Cultures of Warfare from Frederick the Great to Clausewitz* (Rochester, NY., Camden House, 2011).

early as 19 August, the deputy Sylvain Codet had compared the prisons, already engorged with traitors, to "a crowd of conspirators." They presented an imminent threat to all true patriots, he declared, predicting that, in "under eight days, many heads will fall."[245] The inchoate deliberative capacity of the crowd – labouring under the simultaneous absence of news and abundance of rumour – had necessarily to respond in an instant, even pre-emptive fashion. Thus as word of Verdun reached Paris, the sansculottes began their murderous frenzy. "How sad it is to be obliged to come to such extremities," wrote the diarist Célestin Guittard de Floriban, before pointedly adding that, "it is far better to kill the devil *before* he kills us."[246] The denunciation culture incubated by the fall of the monarchy on 10 August 1792 – and that would reach full throttle in the Convention – was, in part, built upon this desire to outmanoeuvre the enemies of the people, to strike at them before they could strike at the Revolution.[247] This tactic necessarily placed a premium upon speed since in the time taken for the reception of news to turn speculation into certain knowledge, counterrevolutionary forces might have overwhelmed the state.[248] The politics of treason and denunciation was thus premised upon a basic time calculus, one conditioned by the peculiar temporal dynamics of the Revolution itself.

Unlike the epidemic of finger-pointing that afflicted the French Revolution, the American Revolution is often noted for its relative fraternal harmony. In fact, the need to identify hidden internal enemies was a similarly pressing problem. In July 1776, Joseph Hawley, a veteran of the Stamp Act protests, wrote a letter to Elbridge Gerry, who, at that time, was a delegate to the Continental Congress, and thus involved in administering for the general safety of the rebellious colonies. Hawley conjured an image of a Republic sinking under the weight of its own internal enemies:

> I have often said that I supposed a declaration of independence would be accompanied with a declaration of high treason: most certainly it must immediately and without the least delay follow it. Can we subsist? Did any state ever subsist without exterminating traitors? I never desire to see high treason extended further than it is now extended in Britain. But an act of high treason we must have instantly. No one thing made the declaration of independence indispensably necessary more than cutting off traitors. It is amazingly wonderful, that having no capital punishment for our intestine enemies, we have not been utterly ruined before now. For God's sake, let us not run such risks a day longer. […] Dear sir, this matter admits of no

[245] Sylvain Codet, cited in Tackett, 'Rumour and Revolution: The case of the September Massacres,' *French History and Civilization: Papers from the George Rudé Seminar* 4 (2011), pp.54-64.
[246] Célestin Guittard de Floriban, *Journal de Célestin Guittard de Floriban, bourgeois de Paris sous la Révolution*, ed., Raymond Aubert (Paris, France-Empire, 1974), p.175: "Qu'il est triste d'être obligé d'en venir à de pareilles extrémités, mais on dit qu'il vaut mieux tuer le diable qu'il nous tue."
[247] On the denunciatory politics of the French Revolution, see: Colin Lucas, 'The theory and practice of denunciation in the French Revolution,' *Journal of Modern History* 68 (4, 1996), pp.768-85; Thomas Manley Luckett, 'Hunting for spies and whores: a Parisian riot on the eve of the French Revolution,' *Past and Present* (1997), pp.116-43.
[248] See, for example, Marisa Linton, *Choosing Terror: Virtue, Friendship and Authenticity in the French Revolution* (Oxford, OUP, 2013), pp.201-226.

> delay…Our whole cause is every moment in amazing danger for want of it. The common understanding of the people (like unerring instinct) has long declared this; and from the clear discerning which they have had of it, they have been long in agonies about it...[249]

Treason had acquired such historic proportions because all forms of political betrayal could suddenly be conceived as potentially fatal threats to the Revolution.[250] The "whole cause" of the Republic, Hawley observed, was in the most "amazing danger" from a want of the means to promptly punish traitors. The imminence of the danger filled "every moment" with risks that could not be run even "a day longer."

An "act of high treason" would operate with the alacrity of those it was destined to protect: the people, whose judgement, "like unerring instinct," could instantly intuit guilt or innocence. This political instantaneity, however, was also problematic. The radical changeability of political sympathies was one manifestation of the revolutionary demolition of absolutist historicity, which had restricted future political possibilities to static dimensions, such as the number of sovereign rulers or the scale of standing armies.[251] It was not merely that the Revolution had increased the number of potential historical actors; rather, the vicissitudes of the Revolution itself constantly rearranged the fealties of those actors. When Sir William Howe led a successful British expedition to capture Philadelphia in 1777, many of the city inhabitants once considered loyal to the American cause suddenly switched sides. Aghast, the Pennsylvania General Assembly tightened its test oaths; later, an Assembly committed would observe how there were "many persons amongst us," who, though "preferring a slavish dependence on the British King," had, "by a professed neutrality," succeeded in "screening themselves from the notice of Government." Yet, "*as soon as opportunity offered*," many had "declared themselves in favour of our Enemies, and became active against the Liberties of America."[252] Treasonable acts, like conspiracy, were often perpetrated suddenly, as if out of nowhere – as if out of a future that could not be foreseen. It was this essential non-knowledge of potential threats – this speculative engagement with politics – that conditioned revolutionary deliberative reasoning. Compounding this problem was the fact that even the outwardly authentic could – at a moment's notice – be exposed as disloyal or traitorous. Many radicals in North Carolina, for example, demanded the total extirpation of all those opposed to the Revolution, since only by "hanging traitors," and by

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[249] Joseph Hawley to Elbridge Gerry (17 July, 1776), in James T. Austin, ed., *The Life of Elbridge Gerry, With Contemporary Letters* (2 vols., Boston, 1828-29), I, pp.206-8.
[250] On treason and the early American Republic, see: Charles Royster, '"The Nature of Treason": Revolutionary Virtue and American Reactions to Benedict Arnold,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 36 (3, 1979), pp.163-93; Judith L. Van Buskirk, *Generous Enemies: Patriots and Loyalists in Revolutionary New York* (Philadelphia, 2002).
[251] On the transformation in temporality occasioned by this shift, see: Koselleck, *Futures Past*, pp.20-1.
[252] Reported by the *Pennsylvania Packet* (27 May 1778), cited in Peter C. Messer, '"A Species of Treason & Not the Least Dangerous Kind": The Treason Trials of Abraham Carlisle and John Roberts,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 123 (4, October 1999), pp.303-332, here: pp.312-13.

executing Loyalists in particular, would it be possible to "give stability to the new government."[253]

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The problem with rumour is the simultaneous promiscuity and passivity of its circulation. It is unclear where it comes from, who is transmitting it, and where it is going. In the context of revolutionary crisis, however, rumour satisfied a vital psychotemporal need: it made history make sense. It gave the increasingly shapeless, disfigured horizon of expectation some coordinating contours – and it did so within the accelerated time frame of revolutionary crisis. The remarkable concatenation and compression of events scrambled the linearity of intent, experience and outcome, in the process deranging the time of history. Rumour, by contrast, could morph itself in real time, almost as if to make up for the way in which verifiable knowledge constantly fell behind the pace of reported events. Conspiratorial explanandum therefore substituted for what, in the meantime, was the inefficacy of historical explanation. Furthermore, by adhering to a fictive "horizon of expectation" – to a future conceived in hearsay – individuals could believe themselves to be operating rationally in the present without any need for reference to a "space of experience," especially as the unprecedented nature and speed of revolutionary events had already undermined the cognitive coordinating function of past events.

III. Temporal claustrophobia: the Continental Congress, 1774-1776

In January 1776, along the margins of an unfinished petition to the king, Pennsylvanian delegate to the second Continental Congress John Dickinson, scrawled a resume of recent events. "On January 8 the text of George III's speech from the throne of October 26, 1775, reached Philadelphia," in which the monarch had dismissed a previous petition – the Olive Branch – and accused his colonial subjects of "a desperate conspiracy." "[A]lmost immediately several delegates began a move in Congress to secure passage of a resolution denying the king's charge that the colonies were waging a rebellious war 'for the purposes of establishing an independent Empire.'" The task of articulating the response fell to James Wilson of Pennsylvania, a conciliatory voice who called upon Congress to clarify its intentions with respect independence. An announcement was momentarily delayed and

[253] Cited in, Claude Halstead Van Tyne, *The Loyalists in the American Revolution* (New York, NY., Macmillan Company, 1902), p.271; see: Maya Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles: American Loyalists in the Revolutionary World* (New York, NY., Knopf Doubleday, 2012).

subsequently consigned to a committee. When the motion of disavowal eventually emerged a month later, on 12 February, one dismayed delegate wrote in his diary that it was "very long, badly written and full against Independency."[254] It was now also irrelevant. During the intervening weeks the moderate sentiments that had largely dominated the Congress were entirely overtaken by events. "A succession of events that followed quickly upon arrival of the king's speech," wrote Dickinson, "ultimately undermined any hope that men of Wilson's principles might have had to put Congress on record against independence." According to the marginalia, details of the royal reply had arrived on "the very day Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* was published in Philadelphia," and "only the evening before letters had been received from Virginia bearing news of Lord Dunmore's devastating attack on Norfolk on January 1."[255] Over the course of a single day, the political patience required to issue a petition – and await a response – became suddenly intolerable. It seemed as though events were closing in upon the present, compressing the timescale of deliberation, and intensifying the dangers of delay. When Congress was later told, "on January 17, of Montgomery's repulse at Quebec, the mood of the delegates changed decisively."[256]

Since its initial convocation in 1774, the Continental Congress was assailed by a crushing sense of temporal claustrophobia. As the volume and magnitude of political events increased, the time spans available to comprehend them diminished: the present was consequently deprived of its constancy by the hurried onset of the future, which truncated the spaces of experience, and created a sensation of compression.[257] Whilst this undermined the predictive capacity of contemporaries, the future was not entirely unknowable, for despite the rapidity of its onset, the colonists largely assumed that it promised oppression and enslavement. This experience of accelerated time narrowed the space of deliberation. In this context, delay became unendurable.[258] It forced congressional delegates into contemplating

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[254] Paul H. Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress, 1774-1789* (25 vols. Washington D.C., Library of Congress, 1976-2000) III, p.63-4.

[255] It is likely that *Common Sense* was only advertised on 8 January and published immediately thereafter, between 9-10 January. The popular impact of the pamphlet cannot be understated; within three months of publication, it had sold around 120,000 copies: Richard Gimbel, *Thomas Paine: A Bibliographical Check List of Common Sense with an Account of its Publication* (New Haven, CN., 1956), p.57; and according to Josiah Bartlett, a delegate from New Hampshire, it was then "greedily bought up and read by all ranks of people": Bartlett to John Langdon (13 January 1776), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates*, III, p.88; see also: Paul Downes, *Democracy, Revolution, and Monarchism in Early American Literature* (Cambridge, CUP, 2002), p.18.

[256] The popular mood had also shifted apace: on 14 February 1776, John Adams remarked with astonishment that, "[s]carcely a [news]paper comes out without a speculation or two in open vindication of opinions, which, five months ago, were said to be unpopular.": Adams to James Warren (14 February 1776), in Taylor, ed., *The Papers of John Adams*, IV (1979), p.23. On the basis of monarchical legitimacy during the imperial crisis, see: Jerrilyn Greene Marston, *King and Congress: The Transfer of Political Legitimacy, 1774-1776* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1987), pp.3-12, 67-99.

[257] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.22; for the physical and psychological consequences of the "startling upheaval" that many Americans experienced during this time, see: W.J. Rorabaugh, *The Alcoholic Republic* (Oxford, OUP, 1979), p.125-46.

[258] As Hartmut Rosa explains, "*subjectively* the experience of stress, time pressure, and 'racing' time are empirically ascertainable indicators for the perception of a scarcity of time resources and an accelerated elapse of time." In this sense, the "acceleration of the pace of life contains…an *increase in the aggregated speed of action* as well as the *transformation of the experience of time* in everyday life": *Social Acceleration*, p.122.

schemes that would enable the colonies to break out of the tightening historical confines impressed upon them by the imperial crisis. Temporal claustrophobia not merely accompanied the onset of revolution; it created the conditions in which revolution would become unavoidable. Responses to changes in the perception of historical time governed the activities of the Continental Congress.

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Despite a decade and more of escalating political tensions many colonial leaders seemed content to consign their conflict with the imperial metropole to a process of gradual resolution. As late as 1773, Dickinson had firmly advocated a policy of temporization. Hasty precipitation of a political crisis, he concluded, would set American purposes at nought: far better to wait "till Time shall ripen the Period for asserting more successfully the Liberties of these Colonies."[259] If the struggle were ever to occasion separation, then historical developments would naturally unfold according to familiar chronological coordinates. In the two centuries since the first settlers had landed on American soil, the colonies had progressed in terms of population, agriculture, civility – there seemed little reason to assume that this pattern would not continue across a similar timescale. "Our natural increase in wealth and population," observed Thomas Cushing, the governor of Massachusetts, in September 1773, "will in a course of years, settle this dispute in our favour." The alternative, "a rupture fatal to both countries," was undesirable not least because it was unprecedented, and therefore unintelligible.[260] For Dickinson, as for others, the imperial dispute – it was scarcely a rebellion, let alone a revolution – was situated within a foreseeable, pre-charted trajectory of colonial history. Patience was therefore essential. If the colonists were to properly pursue the path of "our future greatness," remarked one New York pamphleteer, then "posterity" would need to "wait for those materials that may be furnished by the hand of Time."[261]

It was at a relatively late hour in the imperial crisis that the hand of time seemed to shift speeds. For several decades, the ideological concerns of classical precedent – in which once youthful, robust republics morphed over time into decadent and ultimately decrepit

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[259] John Dickinson to Samuel Adams (10 April, 1773), in William Vincent Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams, being a narrative of his acts and opinion, and of his agency in producing and forwarding the American Revolution* (3 vols., Boston, 1865), II, p.61; on pre-Revolutionary rhythms of colonial American life, see: David Freeman Hawke, *Everyday life in Early America* (New York, NY., Harper & Row, 1988), pp.88-100.
[260] William Cushing to Arthur Lee (Boston, 20 September 1773), in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (4th series, Boston, Little, Brown and Company, 1858), IV, p.360.
[261] 'Address to the Inhabitants of New-York' (New York, 20 October 1774), in Peter Force, ed., *American Archives, Fourth Series. Containing a documentary history of the English Colonies in North American from the King's Message to Parliament, of March 7, 1774, to the Declaration of Independence by the United States* (4th series, 9 vols., Washington DC, 1837-46), I, p.886; on the elongated temporality of pre-revolutionary visions of independence, see: J. M. Bumsted, '"Things in the Womb of Time": Ideas of American Independence, 1633-1763,' in *The William and Mary Quarterly* 31 (4, October 1974), pp.533-64.

empires – had organised the historical prognostications of colonial society.[262] According to this cyclical vision of history, Great Britain may be a great empire at present, but it would, at some future point, inevitably succumb to decay. Given the sparsity of mid-eighteenth century perceptions of historical time, this remained, as late as 1771, a distinctly distant prospect.[263] Indeed, according to one time-travelling tale, entitled 'Curious REMARKS by North-American travellers, in 1994,' the process of deterioration was predicted to proceed at a fixed rate for several centuries. Set two hundred and three years in the future, two bewildered Americans arrive in London and recall their "astonishment" at finding that "this once imperial city," whose "trade was extended round the globe, and whose conquering arms had subdued a great part" of it, had "fallen to a familiar decay and ruin," just like "Athens and Rome."[264] Whilst the city was overgrown "with trees possessed by rock," and Parliament had been reduced to "an old wall," the once mighty centre of British power – Whitehall – was now a mere "field of turnips."[265]

During the thirty-one months that separated the Boston Tea Party and the Declaration of Independence, this gradualist conception of historical change disintegrated. Americans had long pondered the unnerving possibility that, if the British Empire were to collapse under the accumulated weight of its own decadence, if it were to degenerate into luxury and tyranny as classical precedent suggested, then the resulting economic and political catastrophe might see the colonies dragged down with it.[266] In 1745, the governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, could scoff at ideas of colonial rebellion or separation: "if ever there should a time come when they should grow restive and dispos'd to shake off their Dependency upon their Mother Country," then such a "possibility" seemed at "the Distance of some Centuries."[267] By 1776, however, the Welsh radical pamphleteer, Richard Price, presented the British Empire as

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[262] Stow Persons, 'The Cyclical Theory of History in Eighteenth Century America,' *American Quarterly* 6 (2, Summer, 1954), pp.174-63.
[263] Eran Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (University of Virginia Press, Charlottesville, 2009), pp.2-4; Caroline Winterer, *The Mirror of Antiquity: American Women and the Classical Tradition, 1750-1900* (Ithaca, NY, Cornell UP, 2007), pp.22, 23; Dorothy Ross, 'Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America', *The American Historical Review* 89 (No.4, October 1984), pp.909-28; Thomas M. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality and Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2008), pp.17-38.
[264] On the classical themes of virtue and corruption and their relation to time, especially the conceptualization of republican decay, in an American-Atlantic context, see J.G.A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1975), pp.506-52.
[265] 'Curious REMARKS by North-American Travellers, in 1994,' in *The Universal American Almanack, or Yearly Magazine…* (Philadelphia, William Evitt at the Bible-in-Heart, in Strawberry-Alley, opposite the Bull's Head Tavern, 1771), cited in Zara Anishanslin, 'Producing Empire: The British Empire in Theory and Practice,' in Andrew Shankman, ed., *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor, and the Conflict for a Continent* (New York, NY., Routledge, 2014), pp.27-53, here: p.27.
[266] Drew R. McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 1980), pp.48-75; Robert A. Nisbet, *Social Change and History: Aspects of the Western Theory of Development* (New York, NY., 1969).
[267] William Shirley cited in Theodore Draper, *Struggle for Power: The American Revolution* (London, Little, Brown and Co., 1996), p.156.

"enervated by luxury; encumbered with debts; and hanging by a thread."[268] The colonies were thus ripe for revolt, for whilst the Stamp Act (1765) and Townshend Acts (1767) had alerted many to the British capacity for tyranny, it was the imperial response to a violation of the Tea Act (1773) – and the Boston Tea Party, in particular – that accelerated fears of dissipation and tyranny.[269]

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As several tons of tea filtered to the bottom of Boston harbour in December 1773, news of the destruction of East India Company property – a treasonable offence – reached London.[270] Incensed, Parliament decided upon revenge, and retaliated with the so-called 'Intolerable Acts,' closing the port and all but abolishing the Massachusetts executive council [Fig. 5]. In the space of several weeks Boston came to resemble an internment camp. It was only in retrospect, once the rapid concatenation of events unleashed in December 1773 could be properly apprehended, that Samuel Adams realised the extent to which these Acts had accelerated the onset of revolution. "The Boston Port Bill," he wrote in April 1776, "suddenly wrought a Union of the Colonies which could not be brot about by the Industry of years."[271] In September 1774 that "Union" – the First Continental Congress – assembled at the Carpenters' Hall in Philadelphia, determined to defend "the welfare of our common country." Quite what this involved, however, remained unclear.[272]

From the very beginning the Continental Congress was divided between a radical desire to precipitate political change – in essence, to overhaul the constitutional relationship between the colonies and Great Britain, not merely to see the 'Intolerable Acts' revoked – and a moderate wish to preserve the historic ties between colonial periphery and imperial centre. Nobody wanted independence (at least, not yet). This delicate balance was dramatically exposed when, on 16 September 1774, Paul Revere rode into Philadelphia carrying the

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[268] Richard Price, cited in McCoy, *Elusive Republic*, p.48.
[269] On the catalyzing impact of the Boston Tea Party, see: Benjamin W. Labaree, *Catalyst for Revolution. The Boston Tea Party, 1773* (Boston, MA., Bicentennial Commission Publication, 1973), p.15; Russell Bourne, *Cradle of Violence: How Boston's Waterfront Mobs Ignited the American Revolution* (New York, NY., Wiley, 2006), pp.91-3; Walter H. Conser, Jr., Robald M. McCarthy, David J. Toscano, Gene Sharp, eds., *Resistance, Politics, and the American Struggle for Independence, 1765-1775* (Boulder, CO., Lunne Rienne, 1986);
[270] Approximately 46 tons of tea was tipped overboard from the *Beaver, Eleanor* and *Darmouth* trading ships; see: George C. Daughan, *If by Sea: The Forging of the American Navy from the Revolution to the War of 1812* (New York, NY., Basic Books, 2008); James F. Shepherd, Gary M. Walton, 'Economic Change after the American Revolution: Pre- and Post-War Comparisons of Maritime Shipping and Trade, ' *Explorations in Economic History* 13 (1976), pp.397-422; Paul A. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp.100-6.
[271] Samuel Adams to Samuel Cooper (Philadelphia, 30 April 1776), in Harry Alonzo Gushing, ed., *The Writings of Samuel Adams* (4 vols., New York, NY., G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1907), III, p.284.
[272] Acts of improvisation have been noted by Joseph J. Ellis, *Revolutionary Summer: The Birth of American Independence* (New York, NY., Knopf, 2013), amongst others; subsequent sections of this chapter will fully outline the basis of this improvisation.

Suffolk Resolves. In a nod to the galloping pace of events, Revere completed the three hundred and fifty mile ride from Suffolk County, Massachusetts, in a possibly recording-breaking five days.[273] The demands laid before the Congress by the Committees of Correspondence in the Suffolk, Worcester, Essex and Middlesex counties were firm if relatively unspectacular – a boycott of British goods, a campaign of non-compliance with the Boston Port Bill, the raising of a colonial militia. The tone, however, was incendiary. As the preamble declared,

> On the fortitude, on the wisdom and on the exertions of this important day, is suspended the fate of this new world, and of unborn millions. If a boundless extent of continent, swarming with millions, will tamely submit to live, move and have their being at the arbitrary will of a licentious minister, they basely yield to voluntary slavery, and future generations shall load their memories with incessant execrations.

By claiming that the future liberties of the colonies were "suspended" upon the deliberations of a single day, the Suffolk Resolves underscored the immediacy of the historic moment.[274]

Fig. 5. Nathan Daboll, 'Freebetter's New-England Almanack, for the Year 1776' (1775)

This rhetoric of historical instantaneity placed the First Continental Congress within an accelerating flow of time, since, according to the authors, the future appeared to be folding itself in upon the present, visibly contracting the space of deliberation. That the "suspended"

[273] David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (Oxford, OUP, 1994), pp.26-7.
[274] A rhetoric of temporal suspension would become a commonplace description of the revolutionary-historical experience: see for example, *An Astronomical Diary; Or, Almanack for the Year of Christian Era, 1775…* (by Nathanael Low. A student in Physic.), (Boston, printed by Kneeland and Adams, 1775), in which the author opines: "My dear brethren, the destiny of America seems to be suspended on the present controversy!"

time adumbrated in the Resolves was restricted to a single "important day" further heightened the need for speed. A moment lost and the cause would be lost; failure by the delegates to act instantly would swiftly entail "the endless and numberless curses of slavery upon us, our heirs and their heirs forever." Boston, in fact, already "thronged with military executioners."[275] Thus the colonies could no longer proceed forward in time, since the future – once thought to be predetermined – was now fraught with danger and hurtling towards the present at an unprecedented speed.

The Resolves were met with rapturous applause by the radicals; the moderates, meanwhile, were reduced to a few muted mutterings (and, in the case of John Dickinson, actual tears). The proposals were nevertheless adopted with immediate effect and with only partial dissent. Faced by a spontaneous and unsolicited petition from the aggrieved citizens of Massachusetts, many delegates realised that they were in danger of ceding the political initiative to the Committees. The authors of the Resolves had situated themselves as the true representatives of the public will, since they, unlike the dawdling Congress, were unshackled by the legal and historical conventions of colonial governance, and capable of spontaneously expressing popular indignation.[276] By claiming to have momentarily stopped time, the authors sequestered the present moment from both past and future, enabling themselves to make an unmediated, instant identification between the demands outlined in the Resolves and the popular will as they saw it.[277] This, in turn, would allow America – "this new world" – to reconfigure its historical trajectory, and thus to avoid the accelerated decrepitude that a continued, unbroken bond to the colonial past surely promised.

The delegates were therefore trapped, both by the delegitimising slowness of their deliberations and by a "republican faction in Congress," which, as Joseph Galloway observed, "had provided a mob, ready to execute their secret orders." The "cruel practice of tarring and feathering had been long since introduce," he added, which rather "lessened the firmness of some of the loyalists."[278] A month later, on 21 October, the Congress pushed back against the rhetoric of suspended time and issued a 'memorandum' to the colonies in which they pleaded for patience. The "situation of publick affairs grows daily more and more alarming," the delegates admitted, yet despite "the violence with which affairs have been impelled," they had "not yet reached that fatal point."

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[275] *The Suffolk Resolves*; see also: Nathanael Low, An Astronomical Diary; Or, Almanack for the Year of Christian Era, 1771… (by A student in Physic.) (Boston, printed by Kneeland and Adams, 1775): "the destiny of America seems to be suspended in the present."

[276] As Mercy Otis Warren wrote in her *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution. Interspersed with Biographical, Political and Moral Observations* (3 vols., Boston, MA., Manning and Loring 1805), whilst the Congress temporized, "the leading characters [in Massachusetts] contemplated the present moment, replete with consequences of the utmost magnitude," I, p.134.

[277] Governeur Morris observed how in New York in 1774, "the mob begin to think and reason": cited in Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and the Revolutionary America* (Oxford, OUP, 2005), p.56.

[278] Joseph Galloway, *Historical and Political Reflections on the Rise and Progress of the American Rebellion* (London, 1780), p.69.

> We do not incline to accelerate their motion, already alarmingly rapid; we have chosen a method of opposition that does not preclude a hearty reconciliation with our fellow-citizens on the other side of the *Atlantic*. We deeply deplore the urgent necessity that presses us to an immediate interruption of commerce that may prove injurious to them.[279]

Four days later, in a petition addressed directly to George III, the delegates bound the future of the colonies to the historic wisdom of the British crown, assuring the king of American loyalty "'til time shall be no more."[280] The First Continental Congress, which adjourned the very next day, narrowly outmanoeuvred the propulsion of the popular will by appealing to this static, iterable vision of history. Reconciliation with a benevolent monarchy, it was claimed, would not only ameliorate political tensions, it would avert the prospect of rupture by re-anchoring the future – now replete with uncertainty – to a vision of a verifiable and repetitious colonial past. In other words, the Congress believed itself to be capable of making political time slow down. They were to be swiftly disabused of this belief.

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In February 1775, Parliament declared Massachusetts to be in a state of rebellion, trashing the loyal petition and vindicating the fears of the Suffolk Resolves. Events once again re-accelerated.[281] "As our publick affairs are now situated," declared the anonymous author of one New England pamphlet, "almost every day opens new scenes, […] when not only our welfare, but [the] prosperity of future generations, seem to turn upon a critical period."[282] Two months later, following the battles of Lexington and Concord, the political crisis, which now clearly threatened war, seemed to become unmoored from the ordinary calculation of dates and events. "All plans, proposals, &c. prior to the nineteenth of April, *i.e.* to the commencement of hostilities," cautioned Paine, "are like the almanacks of the last year; which, though proper then, are superceded and useless now."[283] The apparent impetuosity of

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[279] *Memorial to the Inhabitants of the Colonies, addressed to the inhabitants of the colonies of New-Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode-Island, and Providence Plantations, Connecticut, New-York, New-Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Counties of New-Castle, Kent, and Sussex, on Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina*, in *American Archives*, I, p.921, 927.
[280] 'Petition to the King' (25 October 1774), which called upon him to repeal the Coercive Acts; the next day the First Continental Congress adjourned.
[281] In February 1775, John Adams, under the pen name 'Novanglus,' cast imperial luxury as "a cancer [which] eats faster and faster every hour," until the "people grow less steady," and "virtue, integrity, public spirit, simplicity, frugality become the objects of ridicule," replaced by "vanity, luxury, foppery, selfishness, meanness, and downright venality…": 'III. To the Inhabitants of the Colony of Massachusetts-Bay, 6 February 1775,' in Taylor, *The Papers of John Adams*, II, pp.243-56, here p.255.
[282] 'Cosmopolitan, No. IV' (Worcester, MA., 17 November 1775), in Force, ed., *American Archives*, III, p.1588.
[283] Paine, 'Common Sense,' in Mark Philp, *Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings* (Oxford, OUP, 2008), p.20.

the present had fractured the capacity of past experiences to arrange political expectations, rendering every passing moment both historic and unrecognisable.

A second Congress was hastily convened. During the intervening months, however, the space of representation had expanded, enrolling an ever-greater number of potential actors into the political drama. Extra-legal Committees of Safety and Committees of Observance proliferated across the colonies, wresting control from local institutions of government, and justifying their actions by claiming to act in the name of the people.[284] In May, the lieutenant governor of New York, Cadwallader Colden, expressed surprise at finding "how entirely the legal authority of Government is now superseded in this Place, where only a few Months ago the prospect of public affairs gave so much satisfaction to the Friends of Government." The "affair" at Lexington and Concord, moreover, seemed to have "hurried people into violences tenfold greater than ever." As deliberative power began rapidly devolving from the Congressional centre, the strata of mediation that separated the popular will and political action grew fewer. The precise location of authority was thrown into flux, yet the speed with which that authority could operate, at least on a local level, became more immediate. "We have got the rampant lion by the beard," cried the New England pamphleteer: "by keeping the hold we may demolish his strength," but should "we yield to his force, he will rend us to atoms." If the inhabitants of the colonies were therefore to escape "the vociferous, sanguinary jaws" of British despotism, then time, far from slowing down, would need to be speeded up. A future fraught with oppression necessitated immediate rupture. Thus the almighty task of acceleration would confirm both the historical agency and political presence of the people. "Let us not only oppose, but make effectual opposition," the pamphleteer concluded: "Let us do it *in time*. It is in our power!"[285]

The possibility of compressing and contorting history, of squeezing immense political change into a comparatively narrow ambit of time, confirmed a significant, though often overlooked, consequence of the American Revolution: history would no longer unfold within time; time would now be restructured according to history. "As the greatest Events are Swiftly impelling each other upon us," observed James Sullivan, "each moment in the present [is] worth an age in any other Time."[286] Within the revolutionary moment, moreover, the pace, pattern and proportions of human history had necessarily to be taken into consideration

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[284] On the day the battles at Lexington and Concord, 19 April 1775, the Baltimore Committee of Safety proudly announced: "Our meetings have been held in public…From the public we receive our authority, not by personal solicitation, but a free and voluntary choice; to that tribunal we submit our actions"; Richard D. Brown, *Revolutionary Politics in Massachusetts: The Boston Committee of Correspondence and the Towns, 1772-1774* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1970), pp.237-47; committee structures and provincial assemblies, such as the First One Hundred in Philadelphia, went beyond the mandated intentions of Congress – namely, to enforce the Articles of Association – and regulated commerce, suppressed dissent, and even prepared defences for war: Richard Alan Ryerson, *The Revolution is Now Begun: The Radical Committees of Philadelphia, 1765-1776* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), p.131, 177.

[285] 'Cosmopolitan, No. IV,' in Force, ed., *American Archives*, III, p.1589.

[286] James Sullivan to John Adams (9 May, 1776), in Taylor, ed., *The Papers of John Adams*, IV (1979), p.178.

because time was now perceived to be racing out of control, "Such [was] the celerity of the American world."[287] Time had become "metaphorically dynamicized into a force of history itself."[288] This perception of temporal contraction, in which a single present "moment" seemed to acquire the historical equivalence of "an age," occasioned a divergence in the relative velocities of time and history. As such, it became possible to experience an immensity of historical change within miniscule units of time.

In *The Rights of British America* (1774), Thomas Jefferson alluded to this temporalisation of history. "Scarcely have our minds been able to emerge from the astonishment into which one stroke of parliamentary thunder has involved us, before another more heavy, and more alarming, is fallen on us." Whilst "single acts of tyranny" might be ascribed "to the accidental opinion of a day," a prolonged "series of oppressions" pointed to "a deliberate and systematical plan of reducing us to slavery." The onset of tyranny, a clear manifestation of imperial degeneration, now approached at an unfamiliar, accelerating pace. America may have "hastened through the reigns which preceded" the present monarchy, but "the violations of our rights were less alarming" then because they had been "repeated at more distant intervals than that rapid and bold succession of injuries" which would probably "distinguish the present from all other periods of [the] American story."[289] Thus whilst the future remained foreseeable, the time span that seemed to separate it from the present underwent foreshortening. In order to avert this rapidly advancing future, the delegates would need to smash the cycle of history, to devise a different historical trajectory, one that would embrace the unforeseeable.[290] "There are many among us," wrote Sullivan in 1776, who "stand Trembling on the brink and fear to launch away," dumbfounded by the historical void that had opened itself before them. The Declaration of Independence was therefore experienced as an immense act of temporal violence.[291] A fracture in the "connexion"

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[287] This conclusion has seldom, if ever, been drawn from the American Revolution; it is typically the French Revolution and its political consequences that are cited as the impetus for this change: Reinhardt Koselleck, 'Historia Magistra Vitae: The Dissolution of the Topos into the Perspective of a Modernized Historical Process,' pp.26-42 and 'Historical Criteria of the Modern Concept of Revolution,' pp.43-57 in *Futures* Past, who does not see the American experience as a revolutionary transformation of historical time; in another context, Roger Griffin has dismissed the American Revolution as indicative of any sort of qualitative change in the subsequent experience of historical time: 'Fixing Solutions: Fascist Temporalities as Remedies for Liquid Modernity,' *Journal of Modern European History* 13 (1, 2015), pp.5-23.

[288] Reinhardt Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts* (trans. Todd Samuel Presner and Others), (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 2002), p.165: "Since the second half of the eighteenth century, circumstantial evidence pointing toward the concept of a new time in the strong sense has accrued. Time does not just remain the form in which all histories take place, but time itself gains a historical quality. Consequently, history no longer takes place in time, but rather through time."

[289] Thomas Jefferson, 'The Rights of British America,' in Joyce Appleby and Terence Ball, eds., *Jefferson: Political Writings* (Cambridge, CUP, 1999), p.69.

[290] As Ramsay later observed, "the task assigned to the colonial patriots" was "to convince the bulk of the people, that they had an interest in foregoing a present good, and submitting to a present evil, in order to obtain a future greater good, and to avoid a future greater evil": *American Revolution*, I, p.108.

[291] Michael Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Thought* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1988), p.13: "the transition from classical to modern politics, a change that in other parts of the world had taken centuries but in America was carried out in a matter of some seventeen stressful years." See also: J.G.A. Pocock, *Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political*

between Britain and her colonies, Mercy Otis Warren later observed, had also occasioned a rupture in the shape of history, with "the sword drawn, and the scabbard thrown down the gulf of time."[292] Quite when peace would return was therefore "an event enwrapped in the womb of futurity."[293]

Whilst reconfiguring the dimensions of human history, of altering the disconcerting content of the future, appeared possible, this could only truly be realised, as Paine constantly reiterated, within the contracting time flow – the "now" – of the Revolution. "The present winter," he observed in late 1775, was "worth an age if rightly employed," since the future-historical redirection of America following independence would be so immense; but if it were "lost or neglected," then "the whole continent" would likely "partake of the evil."[294] The task was thus simultaneously liberating and onerous: the time available in which to reshape the future, after all, constantly depleted. The "progress and changeability of times and things" exerted novel pressures upon contemporaries since one false move might jeopardise the shape of the American future. "Every one who has a hand in this glorious Revolution," wrote the New Hampshire delegate, William Whipple, "will consider that the Happiness of future Generations, as well as the present, depend on their doings." The problem was that failure would not only entail trans-historical consequences, it would also be "our own fault."[295] In the months preceding independence, the temporal scope of the present shrank even further under the stresses of this open future. In his fourth 'Forester Letter,' Paine illustrated how, within the accelerating stream of the revolutionary "now," the formation of swathes of future historical time might be formed – or wrecked. By citing the loyalist delegates returned to the Pennsylvanian State Assembly in early 1776, Paine characterised those still seeking reconciliation as having "travelled to the summit of inconsistency, and that, with such accelerated rapidity as to acquire autumnal ripeness by the first of May." "Back to the first plain path of nature," he instructed, "and begin anew, for in this business your first footsteps were wrong."[296] The anxiety that accompanied temporal claustrophobia confronted the delegates of the Continental Congress with the finitude of cyclical time. If America squandered the political potential of the accelerating present, it would very swiftly confront

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Thought and History (New York, NY., Atheneum, 1971); see, in the context of the early Republic: Major L. Wilson, 'The Concept of Time and the Political Dialogue in the United States, 1828-48,' *American Quarterly* 19 (4, Winter, 1967), pp.619-44.

[292] Warren, *History*, I, p.178.

[293] Warren to Catherine Macaulay (1 February, 1777), in Jeffrey H. Richards and Sharon M. Harris, eds., *Mercy Otis Warren: Selected Letters* (Athens GA., University of Georgia Press, 2009), pp.84-5; see: Kate Davies, *Catharine Macaulay and Mercy Otis Warren: The Revolutionary Atlantic and the Politics of Gender* (Oxford, OUP, 2005), pp.180-219, 248-303, and Shirley Samuels, *Romances of the Republic: Women, the Family, and Violence in the Literature of the Early American Nation* (Oxford, OUP, 1996), pp.96-112.

[294] Paine, 'The Crisis, No.I,' in Norman, ed., *The Crisis Papers*, p.1.

[295] William Whipple to Joshua Brackett (23 July, 1776), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates*, IV, p.532.

[296] Thomas Paine, 'The Forester's Letters, IV (8 May, 1776)', in *Collected Writings: Common Sense, The Crisis, and Other Pamphlets, Articles and Letters…* (New York, NY., The Library of America, 1955), p.85.

its "*rotting time*," and be dragged to decay by the crumbling moral edifice of the British Empire.

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As the crisis continued to gather pace, the deliberations of Congress and the will of the people – as interpreted by the Committees – began moving at different speeds.[297] During an alleged interrogation of "a loyal Constitutionalist" by a New York Committee, one member extolled the primacy of popular action by pointing to its velocity: "What, do you drink Tea? Take care what you do…for you are to know the Committee command the mob, and can *in an instant* let them loose upon any man who opposes their decrees, and complete his destruction."[298] Serious discussion and due diligence were all very well, the Committee member argued, but the patience of the people was almost exhausted. "At a time when Slavery is clanking her infernal chains," read one handbill, stuffed through the letter-boxes and beneath the doormats of every house in New York city, "when Oppression, with gigantick strides is approaching your once happy retreats…will you supinely fold your arms, and calmly see your weapons of defence torn from you, by a band of ruffians?" "How long will ye patiently bear insult and wrong?"[299] In Congress, meanwhile, the discarded petitions and pleas piled up. On 3 May, the Massachusetts provincial congress beseeched delegates to "stem the rapid Progress of a tyrannical Ministry." Resolute to ensure reconciliation with "the mother country," Dickinson, James Duane, Edward Rutledge and other moderates played for time. "[I]f they were to be regarded," Samuel Adams later complained, "they would continue the conflict a century."[300] Still, when moderate delegates proposed that a further petition – an Olive Branch – be sent to the king, a critical number of radicals relented. Congress had signalled "their indulgence of Mr. Dickinson," recalled Jefferson, a consequence "of their great desire not to go too fast for any respectable part of our body."

As the leaves turned and the rough winter winds chilled Philadelphia, the gathering sense of temporal claustrophobia became intolerable. Bouts of panic regularly threatened to

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[297] In his diary, James Allen even defined the character of the largely conservative elites and radical committeemen in terms of their relative political velocities: "Thinking people uneasy, irresolute & inactive. The *Mobility* triumphant. […] The madness of the multitude is but one degree better than submission to the Tea-Act…": 'Diary of James Allen, Esq., of Philadelphia, Counsellor-at-Law, 1770-1778,' *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 9 (2, July 1885), pp.176-96, here: p.186.

[298] *Extract of a Letter from New-Haven, to Mr. Rivington, New-York* (1 April 1775), in *American Archives*, II, p.252-3; on the emergence of street politics and its radical potential, see: Peter Thompson, *Rum Punch & Revolution: Taverngoing & Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), pp.148-58; Simon P. Newman, *Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic* (Philadelphia PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp.11-43.

[299] *Account of the Seizure of Powder and Arms* (New York) (27 December 1774), *American Archives*, I, p.1071.

[300] Samuel Adams to James Warren (16 April 1776), in Wells, *The Life and Public Services of Samuel Adams*, II, p.399.

reduce Congressional sittings to chaos. When a resolution was passed in May, inviting those colonies without "a government sufficient to the exigencies of their affairs" to take matters into their own hands, Duane erupted: "Why all this haste? why this urging? why this driving?"[301] Outpaced by the hyperactivity of the Committees, and rebuffed by the indifference of the British crown, Congress underwent a disorientating experience of historical time. "Questions of Importance," were now, "continuously arising," confronting delegates with a confusing, non-diachronic event flow.[302] The ordering of history – the entire notion of a trajectory, sequence, or classical "taxonomy" of beginnings and endings – was being decisively overturned.[303] "It has ever appeared to me," observed Adams, "that the natural course and order of things was this;"

> …for every colony to institute a government; for all the colonies to confederate, and define the limits of the continental Constitution; then to declare the colonies a sovereign state, or a number of confederated sovereign states; and last of all, to form treaties with foreign powers. But I fear we cannt proceed systematically, and that we shall be obliged to declare ourselves independent States, before we confederate, and indeed before all the colonies have established their governments…[304]

The synchronic intensity of the crisis thus exerted further temporal stress upon the deliberative capacity of the Congress.[305] For Adams, it had become "pretty clear, that all these Measures will follow one another in a rapid Succession, and it may not perhaps be of much Importance which is done first." Speed nevertheless remained vital: "Events of such Magnitude as those which present themselves now in such quick Succession, require constant Attention…" By April 1776, decisive action was desperately urgent. In a series of letters sent to John and Samuel Adams, the lawyer Benjamin Kent upbraided the failures of their dawdling fellow delegates: "What in the name of *common sense*, are you Gentlemen of the Continentall Congress about," fumed Kent, citing how his fellow Bostonians had become "quiet Impatient under your delay of an open declaration."[306] Proposals for petitions to the king continued to proliferate. Yet as Paine had previously observed, within the abbreviating

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[301] James Duane (10 May 1776), in Worthington C. Ford et al, ed., *Journals of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789* (39 vols., Washington D.C., 1904-37), VI, p.1075.
[302] The description is that of Samuel Adams: cited in Edmund Cody Burnett, *The Continental Congress* (New York, N.Y., Macmillan Co., 1941), p.74.
[303] On contemporary conceptions of classical temporality, see: Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, pp.3-4.
[304] John Adams to Patrick Henry (3 June, 1776), in Taylor, ed., *The Papers of John Adams*, IV (1979), pp.234-5.
[305] A week after Adams wrote this letter, Congress appointed a committee to draft a proposed Declaration of Independence, and whilst this was done *before* the debate on independence had even begun, the move was animated by a desire "that no time be lost, in case the Congress agree thereto…" *Journals of the Continental Congress*, V, p.428.
[306] Cited in Stephen E. Patterson, *Political Parties in Revolutionary Massachusetts* (Madison, WI, Wisconsin University Press, 1973), p.151; As early as 1774, observed David Ramsay in his *History of the American Revolution* (2 vols., Philadelphia PA., R. Aitken & son, 1789), patriotic agitators were "for rushing precipitately into extremities. They were for immediately stopping all trade, and could not even brook the delay of waiting till the proposed continental congress should meet," I, p.124.

temporal schema of the Revolution, this means of reconciliation had voided its validity:

> To be always running three or four thousand miles with a tale or a petition, waiting four or five months for an answer, which when obtained requires five or six more to explain it in, will in a few years be looked upon as folly and childishness –. There was a time when it was proper, and there is a proper time for it to cease.[307]

That time was "*now*."[308] Remarkably, the moderate delegates were able to hold out until the late spring, when – finally – the patience of the people snapped.

The scene was set on 6 May at the Virginia Convention in Williamsburg. "Ages yet unborn, and millions existing at present" would depend upon its deliberations, remarked Richard Henry Lee.[309] Four days later, with proceedings barely underway, the doors of the Convention swung open and a troop of petitioners filed in. A delegation from Augusta County reached the front, eager to express the "necessity of making the Confederacy of the United Colonies the most perfect, independent, and lasting." Fearful that the pyrotechnic vengeance recently exacted upon the inhabitants of Norfolk would soon be replicated across the colony, they called for a government that would "bear the test of all future ages."[310] Oppression under the British appeared to shimmer along the time horizon like a grotesque mirage, advancing with a pace inversely proportional to the slowness of Congressional deliberation. As the embattled citizens of Virginia had come to realise, the only means of effacing the future was to frame it for themselves.[311] On 15 May the colony seceded from the British Empire, unilaterally declared independence, and called upon the Continental Congress to do the same.

On the very same day, in Philadelphia, John Adams secured the passage of a resolution demanding all authority derived from the crown "be totally suppressed," instead placing government "under the authority of the people." Back in June 1775, Adams had been portrayed America as "a vast, unwieldy machine," resigned to the fact that "our liberty and felicity will be preserved in the end, though not in the speediest and surest manner." "We cannot force Events."[312] Now, in the late spring of 1776, Adams was actively seeking to foment internal revolution amongst the most moderate colonies. The "exigencies" of the

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[307] Paine, 'Common Sense,' in Mark Philp, *Rights of Man, Common Sense and Other Political Writings* (Oxford, OUP, 2008), p.27.
[308] *Common Sense* is saturated with references to the historical "now": see, *inter alia*, pp.26-7, 36.
[309] Richard Henry Lee to Patrick Henry (20 April, 1776), in *Letters of Delegates*, III, p.563.
[310] Virginia Convention (10 May 1776), in *American Archives*, VI, p.1519.
[311] Ramsay counseled the newly liberated people of America: "You have, with a great expence of blood and treasure, rescued yourselves and your posterity from the domination of Europe. Perfect the good work you have begun, by forming such arrangements and institutions as bid fair for ensuring to the present and future generations the blessings for which you have successfully contended," *History of the American Revolution*, II, p.356.
[312] John Adams to Moses Gill (10 June, 1775), in Taylor, ed., *The Papers of John Adams*, III (1979), p.21; this contradicts Jack Rakove's claim that the American "revolutionaries" were passive observers, not active participants to events: 'Constitutionalism: The Happiest Revolutionary Script,' in Baker, Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, pp.103-117, here: p.108.

present moment, after all, demanded it. Convinced that the resolution would spare their own colonial assembly, the Pennsylvanian delegates blithely voted in favour, ignoring Duane's protestation that "this preamble" was merely a "mechanism" for independence.[313] Duane was right: Adams had placed the "unwieldy machine" into motion. In fewer than four hours, a group of radicals led by Paine and Benjamin Rush descended upon the Philosophical Society Hall and announced their intention of enacting "the resolve of Congress on the fifteenth instant." Within weeks the Pennsylvania Assembly was abolished and a Provincial Convention established in its place. "The revolution is now began," this new body declared on 25 June, "and must be supported."[314]

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The sensation of claustrophobia was often informed by the absence, not the abundance, of information relative to enclosing future events. During the late-eighteenth century, trans-Atlantic news networks were sluggish, or simply unpredictable, still bound by the rhythms of nature.[315] "A ship in 7 weeks from London, brings us pretty perfect intelligence of the infernal designs of our Ministerial enemies," observed Richard Henry Lee in October 1775. This is a telling statement: at the height of the crisis, "intelligence" could take up to "7 weeks" to reach America; yet, upon arrival, news merely confirmed rebel suspicions – their future predictions – that "infernal designs" were being hatched in London. In normal times this might not have matter; but as a superabundance of historically significant events unfolded, a trans-oceanic and inter-colonial backlog of information built up, as the reports of 8 January 1776 demonstrate. This, in turn, created disorientating time lags between event occurrence and information reception.

James Hutson has described the advent of the American Revolution as the "triumph of a delusion," since so many of its protagonists appeared to be labouring under the effects of mental ill-health. Franklin considered John Adams, who was to suffer three nervous breakdowns before 1783, as "absolutely out of his senses." In the early 1770s, James Otis was actually sent to confinement – "bound hand and foot" – as a certified "Lunatick." Alice Lee Shippen, meanwhile, declared that her "imagination" had been "disorder'd" by the Revolution, and was subsequently confined for her own safety in a Pennsylvanian asylum.[316] The use of terminology derived from clinical psychology – such as claustrophobia – is not

[313] *Journals of the Continental Congress,* VI, p.1075.
[314] For a full account, see Rich Ryerson, *The Revolution is Now Begun,* pp.212-37.
[315] Francesco Morriello, 'British and French Imperial Communication Networks in the Atlantic World, 1763-1804' (Unpublished Phd Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2016).
[316] James H. Hutson, 'The American Revolution: The Triumph of a Delusion?,' in Angermann et al, eds., *New Wine in Old Skins*, pp.177-94, here: pp.181-2.

intended to proffer an actual diagnosis of the collective state of mind of the congressional delegates. Whilst it is employed here as primarily a literary device, it also conforms to the psychological landscape of the early Revolution, which was marked by delusions, neuroses, and paranoia. These responses were conditioned by the experience of revolutionary historical time. In September 1774, one Falmouth minister observed how his congregation had begun evincing "a discontent bordering upon madness," a response, he deduced, to "the late Proceedings of Parliament respecting America," which "spreads fast amongst them."[317]

The primary rhetorical gestures of the period, meanwhile, emphasised enclosure: the colonists, it was claimed, were being placed "in shackles," they were to be "enslaved" and ensnared by the forces of British ministerial, and later monarchical, despotism. Washington collapsed these two fixations – enslavement and temporality – when, in a letter of August 1774, he wrote that, "the Crisis is *arrivd*" when the colonists would need to decide between "our Rights" or to a train of events – a new historical trajectory, in effect – that "will make us as tame, & abject Slave, as the Blacks we Rule over…"[318] This sensation of suffocation – translated into a fixation with the political future of the colonies – was a commonplace amongst the revolutionaries. As Hutson concludes – *contra* Bernard Bailyn – the conviction that "the British ministry was conspiring to enslave America" was not a realistic response to recent history; it is instead "explicable by the principles of psychology rather than a theme in intellectual history."[319] If viewed as a response to contemporary experiences of historical time, however, the category of claustrophobia synthesises these two perspectives. The belief that their "Ministerial enemies" were conspiring to enslave them was patently ridiculous and borne of colonial paranoia.[320] This paranoia, however, was fostered within a system of slowly disseminating information and rapidly accelerating events. The sense of historical compression this occasioned was not so much a response to the *contents* of recent history as to its *dynamics*. A disruption in traditional intellectual appreciations of historical structure and sequence occasioned a psychotemporal response akin to claustrophobia – an anxiety disorder activated by a fearful response to enclosed (or *enclosing*) spaces.[321]

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[317] James B. Bell, *A War of Religion: Dissenters, Anglicans and the American Revolution* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.126.
[318] Washington to Bryan Fairfax (24 August, 1774), in W. W. Abbot, Dorothy Twohig, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*. Colonial Series (10 vols., Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1995), X, pp.154-56.
[319] See: Hutson, 'Triumph of a Delusion,' p.190, as compared with, Bailyn, *The Origins of American Politics* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1968), p.53.
[320] This term – "paranoia" – is used to evoke a general world-view, and does not diagnose a specific clinical state; for its *historical* usage, see: Wood, *The Creation of the American Republic*, p.17.
[321] It may therefore be useful to view the period of the Continental Congress as a counterpart to the Great Fear of 1789 in France, for example, where the noxious mixture of sparse, uncertain information, rapid political developments, and a tradition of rural paranoia contributed to revolutionary upheaval, all of which is discussed in detail below. See: Samuel Adams, *An Oration delivered at the State-House, in Philadelphia to a very numerous audience, on Thursday the 1st of August, 1776…* (Philadelphia, PA., 1776), pp.26-7.

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It was only when the conflicting speeds of popular and Congressional deliberation re-converged on 4 July that the potential uncontrollability of revolutionary time was – for the moment – assuaged. In the immediate term, the spontaneous will of the people was subsumed by the urgencies of war. In a circular letter sent in December, John Hancock hoped to corral this energy in a bid to defend the besieged Fort of Ticonderoga: the "Affairs of our Country are in a Situation to admit of no Delay," he wrote, expressing his hope that, "by your Regard for succeeding Generations, you will, without a Moment's Delay, exert yourselves to forward the Troops for Ticonderoga from your States."[322] The imperial crisis and the onset of independence had nonetheless altered the perception of historical time. In less than two years, the colonies had overthrown a century-and-a-half of British authority and established an entirely new, albeit loosely confederated state. The historical duration of political chronology was consequently reduced from centuries and decades to weeks and days. "We have crowded the business of an age into the compass of a few months," reflected Paine in 1777: "Truly may we say, that never did men grow old in so short a time!"[323]

The decision to issue the Declaration offered no guarantee that the recently minted American republic would regain control over this torrential sense of time. The act of independence, after all, was also an act of improvisation. It was not a moment of political foresightedness, nor the culmination of a carefully calculated political programme. It was a response to the rush of events; it was a decision arrived at by a small group of panicked men, many of whom now found themselves behaving in unfamiliar ways. "What do you think must be my sensations, when I see the Congress now daily passing Resolutions which I most earnestly pressed for against Wind and Tide, Twelve Months ago?"[324] Whilst the gathering imminence of the future would not be entirely effaced by the Declaration, it could now be freely confronted.

III. Secular history, divine time

The Declaration of Independence classified the United States as a Republic in time.[325] Conceived in "the course of human events," it was the product of historical forces, many of

[322] John Hancock to Certain States (25 December 1776), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates* , V, p.664.
[323] Thomas Paine, 'The Crisis, No.III,' in Norman, ed., *The Crisis Papers*, p.24.
[324] John Adams to James Warren (20 May 1776), in Taylor, ed., *The Papers of John Adams*, IV (1979), p.195: "Every Post and every Day rolls in upon Us Independence like a Torrent!"; but the "gloomy Prospect of Carnage and Devastation that now presents itself in every Part of the Continent," Adams concluded, "is too affecting to give me Pleasure."
[325] Thomas M. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality and Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2008), p.6: "Precisely because New World nations constituted themselves within the span of history – within time as human beings had known it – they staged the process of

which seemed beyond its control.[326] The urgent need of ensuring their own "future security" had forced the colonists to intervene in an historical "course" that seemed to be stretching towards one "direct object," namely, "the establishment of an absolute Tyranny." In an early draft, Jefferson depicted the temporal dynamics of this "course" as the product of the efforts of despotism, as a form of historical acceleration that, by endangering the future liberty of the colonies, had delegitimised the claims of the British crown: "Future ages would hardly believe that the hardiness of one man" – George III – "adventured, *within the short compass of twelve years only*, to lay a foundation so broad & undisguised for tyranny over a people fostered & fixed in principles of freedom."[327] Averting this trajectory towards "Tyranny," however, did not simultaneously charterer an alternative "course." Rather, as Paine wrote in April 1776, America now "hath a blank sheet to write upon."[328] Mercy Otis Warren agreed, observing how the leap towards independence had seemed like "an experiment of hazard," an act that suddenly severed a connection and abolished a "protection" that the colonies "had claimed for more than a century and a half."[329] In July 1776, the future seemed entirely open.

It was in this unsettling context of newness that Jefferson sketched the Declaration. By citing "human events" as the reason the "political band" binding the colonies to their king had "dissolved," the Declaration might have seemed like a transitory document, a scrap of paper that would simply burn up in contact with the accelerated, ongoing history of the Revolution. By appealing to "the Laws of Nature" and "Nature's God," however, Jefferson attempted to invest the revolutionary undertaking with a divine immutability, to place it beyond the malignity of human history. It is almost as though Jefferson were seeking to address a Pocockian problem – the archetypical republican crisis of "temporal finitude," experienced here as the onset of a radically open future – in Lockean language – by an "appeal to heaven," derived from the *Second Treatise on Government* (1689), by John Locke.[330] As Timothy Breen has demonstrated, this "Lockean moment," which coincided

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nation formation in an exemplary way for an audience across the Atlantic." On the intellectual, religious and political inspiration of the Declaration, see: Garry Wills, *Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence* (Boston, MA., Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), *passim*.

[326] Hannah Spahn has observed the chronos/kairos distinction inherent in this phrase: whereas the "course" refers to a chain or grid of historical occurrences, "events" seem less sequentially certain, as contingent rather than a teleological force: *Jefferson, Time and History*, pp.103-4.

[327] Thomas Jefferson, 'Transcript of Declaration of Independence,' in Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, I, p.426. Emphasis added. Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, '"If Others Will not be Active, I Must Drive": George III and the American Revolution,' *Early American Studies* 2 (2004), pp.1-46; William Liddle, "A Patriot King, or None": American Public Attitudes towards George III and the British Monarchy, 1754-1776 (Unpublished PhD. dissertation, Claremont Graduate School, 1970).

[328] Thomas Paine, 'The Forester's Letters, III (22 April, 1776),' in *Collected Writings*, p.84.

[329] Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*, I, p.309.

[330] The status of the new republic as a temporal invention, as an entity that was made, but that could also be unmade, in the heat of history, was overlaid with a divine language that alleviated the uneasy sense that secular history, the medium of human activity, was directionless. See: Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, p.vii-viii: this "moment," writes Pocock, is "a name for the moment in conceptualized time in which the republic was seen as confronting its own temporal finitude," or when, it might be adduced, *kairos* entirely overwhelmed *chronos*; T. H. Breen, *The Lockean Moment: The Languages of Rights on the Eve of the American Revolution* (Oxford, OUP,

with the advent of independence, alerted the colonists to the fact that "God-given rights" were "not dependent on Common Law, Magna Carta, or the Glorious Revolution," all which were historical in character.[331] Jefferson had clung to the *Second Treatise* during his work on the Declaration, inscribing the text with the need, as Breen sees it, for the colonists "to leap out of history."[332] Independence was thus conceived as a rupture between time and history – as an action that would stabilise the future prospects of the Republic by locating the recently independent states within a stream of divine time, and by deriding "undisguised" despotism as the work of wicked men, the actors in a contingent, secular history.[333] America, Jefferson declared, would escape "the history of the present King" – "a history of repeated injuries and usurpations" – and instead advance into the future "with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence."

The references to a divine temporality threaded throughout the preamble to the Declaration may be seen as part of a broader effort to portray the Revolution as an act of renewal or regeneration, a counterbalance to the view, prevalent during the preceding months, that independence would promise an entirely new beginning, unmoored from all historical precedent.[334] Appealing to a divine temporality held out the possibility of unity across time, the victory of continuity over contingency: the "settlement of America," Adams had long believed, was "the opening of a grand design in Providence," one that would illuminate the ignorant and emancipate the enslaved.[335] As Ruth Bloch has argued, religious time reassured the patriots' "conviction that the secular history of the Revolution," which appeared inchoate or explicable only by reference to human connivance, "had a higher, transhistorical meaning," a vein of thought that could be traced back to the "settlement," as Adams claimed, and the Puritanism of the seventeenth century.[336] Central to this search for "transhistorical meaning" was the millennialism of contemporary Christianity.[337] The carapace of millennialism

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2001), pp.9-12; for more on this classical and liberal distinction, see: Joyce Appleby, *Liberalism and Republicanism in the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1992).

[331] Breen, *The Lockean Moment*, p.12.

[332] Ibid, p.12; on Jefferson's reliance upon the text of Locke's *Second Treatise*, see: Carl. L. Becker, *The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas* (New York, NY., Vintage Books, 1942), pp.25-26.

[333] Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, p.18; T. H. Breen, 'Narrative of Commercial Life: Consumption, Ideology, and Community on the Eve of the American Revolution,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 50 (3, 1993), pp.471-501.

[334] The idea of a divine carapace of time protecting the foundational moment of the Republic is discussed in, Downes, *Democracy, Revolution and Monarchism*, pp.20-21; and, Pauline Maier, *American Scripture: Making the Declaration of Independence* (New York, NY., Knopf Doubleday Publishing, 2012).

[335] Cited in Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution, 1783-1815* (Chicago, IL., Precedent Publishing, 1975), p.66.

[336] Ruth H. Bloch, 'Religion and Ideological Change in the American Revolution,' in Mark A. Noll, Luke E. Harlow, *Religion and American Politics: From the Colonial Period to the Present* (Oxford, OUP, 2007), pp.47-63, here: p.49.

[337] On the imbrication of revolutionary ideology and millennialism, see: Nathan O. Hatch, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, CN., Yale University Press, 1977); Alan Heimert, *Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1966); Edmund S. Morgan, 'The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24 (3, 1967), pp.3-43.

softened the abruptness of human historical rupture.[338] This meant that the American Revolution, as the Connecticut Congregationalist minister David Tappan observed, could be viewed as part of "the grand chain of Providence," a "principal link" that was "gradually drawing after it the most glorious consequences to mankind." Its perceived historical speed, meanwhile, was comprehensible as the means of "hastening on the accomplishments of the scripture-prophecies relative to the *Millenial State*."[339] Millennial prefiguration illuminated the future pathways of the fledgling Republic. The "Light" of the Revolution "spreads," observed John Adams, in an uncharacteristic fit of millennial fervour, after the victory at Yorktown: "may it shine more and more *until the perfect day*." Attributing the speed of revolutionary events to a millennial temporality reassured those who gazed out upon a civic and political future that was seemed unnervingly open and unknowable. This also legitimised the Revolution since it imbued political rupture with a wider, global purpose: "The Emperor of Germany is adopting, as fast as he can, American ideas of toleration and religious liberty," continued Adams, predicting that they would "very soon" become "the fashionable system of all Europe."[340]

Millennialism connoted completion in every sense. Whilst it enabled the rationalisation of acceleration towards finality, "the perfect day," it also augured the approach of a period where time and history, forces that so maligned the late-eighteenth century mind, were themselves seen to conclude. Millennial thought did not merely anticipate 'End Times'; it anticipated the end of time. In an oration delivered to the American Philosophical Society in 1780, Timothy Matlack defined the "Milennium" as a time of timelessness, as "a Thousand Years of perfect Peace and Happiness," a period unmolested by the intrusions of history.[341] In particular, the divine temporality of the Declaration, which percolated throughout revolutionary discourse during the late-1770s and early-1780s, stood as a counterpoint to the fretful future visions of civic republican thought, literalising – and thereby neutralising – the "temporal finitude" promised by classical politics.[342] Millennial temporality rejected the endless cyclicality, the rise and inevitable demise of liberty, of civic republicanism by seeming to invest history with a vector. The process of secularization, in which the prophetic anticipation of the end of times was prorogued for political aims, and which depended upon the incomprehensibility of progress, was not, in post-Independence America, transformed into an organising principle by the experience of accelerated historical time. The political

[338] These ideas are discussed in greater detail in, Ruth H. Bloch, *Visionary Republic: Millennial Themes in American Thought, 1756-1800* (Cambridge, CUP, 1985), pp.75-93
[339] David Tappan, *A Discourse Delivered at the Third Parish in Newbury, on the first of May, 1783* (Salem, MA., Samuel Hall, 1783), pp.12-13.
[340] John Adams to Abigail Adams (18 December, 1781), in L. H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlaender, eds., *The Adams Papers*. Adams Family Correspondence (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1973), IV, p.266.
[341] Timothy Matlack, cited in Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, p.97.
[342] Melvin B. Endy, Jr., 'Just War, Holy War, and Millennialism in Revolutionary America,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 42 (1, 1985), pp.3-25.

developments of the late-eighteenth century occasioned ever-briefer intervals for the accumulation of historical experience, making anticipation and uncertainty coterminous; in America, by contrast, revolutionary acceleration, as the motor of millennial prognostications, seemed to offer a means of evading a classically-informed cycle of historical decay, and escaping time altogether.[343]

As the unbounded promise of the Revolution soured after 1783, the globalising-millennial perspective of American Christianity proved incapable of rationalising the increasingly imperilled secular future of the Republic. The "course" of history began to shed its millennial coherence as "human events" concatenated, transforming the present into a profusion of confusingly ordered, ominous occurrences.[344] In 1779, David Rittenhouse had filled his *Continental Almanac* with a series of biblically inspired predictions for the near-term future, amongst which featured the allegorical transformation of bayonets into plowshares.[345] Despite the embrace of acceleration, the bounties of the divine progress of time consistently failed to materialise. Millennial expectations consequently elongated.[346] Another Congregationalist minister and the seventh president of Yale, Ezra Stiles, in 1774 situated 'End Times' at a distance of five hundred years; by 1785, he had already added an additional three hundred years to his prediction, since it was increasingly unclear where – if anywhere – the present was leading.[347] Cyclical theories of deterioration and decay began displacing millennial expectations of future felicity as the Revolution, an historical phenomenon seemingly possessed of its own temporality, became interminable.

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A change in the way history was experienced was reflected by a change in the way history was written.[348] In William Gordon's *The History of the Rise, Progress and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America* (1788), David Ramsay's *The History of the American Revolution* (1789) and Mercy Otis Warren's *The Rise, Progress and Termination of*

[343] On providentialism and the *translatio imperii*, see: Nicholas Guyatt, *Providence and the Invention of the United States, 1607-1876* (Cambridge, CUP, 2007), pp.95-136.
[344] These experiences are discussed at length in chapter 3.
[345] David Rittenhouse, *The Continental Almanac, for the Year of our Lord, 1780* (Philadelphia, 1779), cited in Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, p.78.
[346] The elongation – or "proroguing," to coin a Koselleckian term – of millennial expectations is convincingly portrayed as epiphenomenal of the political disillusionment of the Confederation period by Bloch, *Visionary Republic*, pp.96-8.
[347] Ezra Stiles, 'The United States Elevated to Glory and Honor. A Sermon Preached Before his Excellency Jonathan Trumbull…' (Worcester, MA., Isaiah Thomas, 1785), p.118.
[348] The indispensible text here is: Lester H. Cohen, *The Revolutionary Histories: Contemporary Narratives of the American Revolution* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 1980); see also: Arthur H. Shaffer, *The Politics of History: Writing the History of the American Revolution, 1783-1815* (Chicago, Precedent Publishing, 1975).

the American Revolution (1805), amongst others, the subject matter of Revolution seemed to revolutionise the methodological approach.[349]

The first casualty of revolutionary history writing was the explanatory capacity of Providence, for whilst providential history attributed causation to God, revolutionary history clearly belonged to humankind.[350] Indeed, history now seemed unintelligible without the expatiation of human agency. The historical notion, contained within Puritanical histories of New England in particular, and later generalised by Samuel Davies, that God's "hand" sustained "the great chain of causes and effects" throughout all time was voided by the experience of the Revolution.[351] Extant theories of historical causation were overturned because revolutionary history was seen to appear with such rapid and unexpected force. In an excursus on 1775, Ramsay observed how at "the beggining of the year, the colonists were farmers, merchants, and mechanics," yet by "its close, they had assumed the profession of soldiers," ready to confront the British Empire. "So sudden a transformation of so numerous, and so dispersed a people, is without parallel." In William Gordon's *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment, of the Independence of the United States of America* (1788), the first full-length historical account of the Revolution, matters often turn on tiny temporal moments – on hours or even minutes. At the final battle of Saratoga in 1777, vital information is relayed to the American brigadier general, John Nixon, which, had it been received "a quarter of an hour later, would probably have proved fatal to his whole brigade," and endangered the Revolution itself.[352] Such an account testifies to the narrowing time horizon of revolutionary events in which shrinking deliberative and experiential spaces are seen to engender a disorientating sense of hurry.

These years, Warren concurred, would inevitably be "marked in the annals of time, as one of the most extraordinary eras in the history of man."[353] The centrality of contingency and immediacy, neither of which had featured in a providential historical reality where the actions of God negated the efficacy of human will, fractured the shape of history because they so clearly conflicted with an order and arc of human affairs governed by divine authority. As history thus happened at an accelerated rate, historians were forced to confine their accounts to the maelstrom of Paine's "now." For William Gordon, in particular, this involved abrupt

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[349] William Gordon, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America* (4 vols., London, 1788); David Ramsay, *The History of the American Revolution* (2 vols., Philadelphia, PA., R. Aitken & Sons, 1789); Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution.*
[350] Alan Heimert, *The Sacred Cause of Liberty: Republican Thought and the Millennium in Revolutionary New England* (New Haven, CN., Yale University Press, 1977); John F. Berens, *Providence and Patriotism in Early America, 1640-1815* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 1978); Peter Gay, *A Loss of Mastery: Puritan Historians in Colonial America* (New York, NY., Vintage, 1968).
[351] Cohen, *Revolutionary Histories*, p.45.
[352] Gordon, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment*, II, p.569.
[353] Warren, *History of the Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*, I, p.146; see: Lester H. Cohen, 'Explaining the Revolution: Ideology and Ethics in Mercy Otis Warren's Historical Theory,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 37 (April, 1980), pp.200-18

shifts in grammatical tense. He wrote many of his battle narratives in the present, which, whilst heightening the dramatic and rhetorical thrust, also pointed to a new historical consciousness. A quickening of the narrative pace is achieved through a blending of space and time, often to the edge of incoherence, which enhances the sense of synchronic urgency. "What scenes now offer to our view!" declares Gordon in his record of the Battle of Bunker Hill:

> *Here*, a large and noble town, consisting of about 300 dwelling houses, and near upon 200 other buildings, in one great blaze, burning with amazing fury… *There*, in Boston, the steeples, houses, and heights, are covered with the inhabitants… *Yonder*, the hills around the country, and the fields, that afford a safe and distinct view of the momentous contest, are occupied by Americans of all ages and orders.[354]

Since human efficacy and historical contingency were anathema to the divine lexicon, making sense of the Revolution became an increasingly problematic task. As Lester Cohen has observed, by locating contingency in the future – "in human time, not in the transmundane" – revolutionary historical writing implicitly acknowledged the loss of "cosmic consolation" inherent in the belief that the future always-already possessed a meaning and structure derived from divine sanction.[355] The invocation of the divine in the preamble of the Declaration thus reintroduced transcendent meaning to independence, where it might otherwise have been seen as the consequence of mere happenstance.

The fact that revolutionary histories also contained speculations as to what *might* have happened in other circumstances suggests many authors now saw an historical sphere replete with contingency and a past-future that had been hastily constructed within the ever-narrowing timespan of the past-present. The speed of revolutionary history thus forced revolutionary historians to replace ideas of divine immanence with the experience of historical imminence. Mercy Warren described the Boston Massacre of 1770 as an "accident," a mere "trivial circumstance." Yet it was precisely from "these minute accidents" – which would ordinarily have been "beneath the dignity of history to record" – that, "the most important events" arose. For Jefferson, the entire revolutionary era was a history "of great events from small causes." "So inscrutable is the arrangement of causes & consequences in this world that a two-penny duty on tea, unjustly imposed in a sequestered part of it, changes the condition of all its inhabitants."[356] This threw historical causality into chaos, for

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[354] Gordon, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment*, II, p.43.
[355] Cohen, *The Revolutionary Histories*, p.120.
[356] Paul Leicester Ford, ed.,, *The Autobiography of Thomas Jefferson, 1743-1790, Together with a Summary of the Chief Events in Jefferson's Life* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p.156; similar conclusions were drawn from the French Revolution; for example, the German dramatist, Henrich von Kleist, argued that when Mirabeau, on 23 June 1789, dismissed the king's emissary to, he did not, Kleist claims, have a ready response when he began his declaration, but in the heat of the moment, he blurted out his famous response: "Perhaps it was therefore ultimately the twitch of an upper lip or the ambiguous playing with a shirt cuff," deduces

within the revolutionary crucible, history seemed to appear as if from nowhere. Throughout the Revolution, observed John Marshall, "fresh difficulties" were perceived to have "unfolded themselves."[357] With once omnipotent despots overturned and Providence sidelined (often in favour of pure chance), history became a seemingly ungovernable sphere of multiple, unpredictable human activities. It was unclear what, if anything, the past could usefully transmit to the future. "With the intrusion of a qualitative concept of change," which depended on contingent human actions and perceptions, "the homogenous metaphorical space of philosophical history threatened to collapse."[358]

III. Time "pile-ups": The National Assembly, May–October 1789

"As soon as the word had been pronounced, and the estates-general had been called by the *parlement* and promised by the king, events hurried on and piled-up [*se pressèrent et s'entassèrent*]."[359] In his *Précis de l'histoire de la Révolution Françoise* (1792), Jacques-Antoine Rabaut-Pommier, a deputy to the National Convention, recalled how the precariousness of royal authority in 1789 had presaged the compression of history. The "pile-up" began in late-June when rural grain shortages threatened starvation in the capital.[360]

Kleist, "that caused the overthrow of the order of things": Heinrich von Kleist, cited in Anders Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of Chance: The Napoleonic Wars and the Disorder of Things* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2015), p.111.

[357] John Marshall, *The Life of George Washington, Commander in Chief of the American Forces, During the war which Established the Independence of his Country, and First President of the United States* (5 vols., Philadelphia, PA., C.P. Wayne, 1804), III, p.83.

[358] Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson*, p.141, and Thomas Jefferson to John Melish (10 December, 1814), in J. Jefferson Looney, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Retirement Series (10 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2011), pp.134.; Dorothy Ross, 'Historical Consciousness in Nineteenth-Century America', *The American Historical Review* 89 (No.4, October 1984), pp.909-28; on similar shifts in the nature of history writing in Europe, see: Ernst Wolfgang Becker, *Zeit der Revolution! – Revolution der Zeit?: Zeiterfahrungen in Deutschland in der Ära der Revolutionen, 1789-1848/9* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1999), p.108; for example Chateaubriand, in his *Essai historique, politique et moral sur les revolutions anciennes et modernes* (1797), in *Œuvres complètes de M. le vicomte de Chateaubriand* (10 vols., Paris, Pourrat frères, 1836), II, p.xxiij, could remark: "Souvent il falloit effacer la nuit le tableau que j'avois esquissé le jour: les événements couroient plus vite que ma plume: il survenoit une révolution qui mettoit toutes mes comparaisons en défaut; j'écrivois sur un vaisseau pendant une tempête, et je prétendois peindre comme des objets fixes les rives fugitives qui passoient et s'abimoient le long du bord."

[359] Jacques-Antoine Rabaut-Pommier, *Almanach historique de la Révolution française pour 1792* (Paris, 1792), p.100: "Dès que le mot eut été prononcé, et que les états-généraux eurent été demandés par le parlement et promis par le roi, les évènemens se pressèrent et s'entassèrent." Rabaut-Pommier's use of the pronominal or reflexive verb, s'entasser, could also imply that the "piling-up" of events was moving with such haste that there was no time to verify what exactly was impelling them. This is precisely the language Sylvain Bailly, the mayor of Paris, would use to describe the destruction of the feudal system, achieved "en quelques heures," on the night of 4 August, 1789: "Toutes les propositions ont été *entassées* et précipitées; […] Il en a résulté un relâchement de touts [sic] les liens, un affaissement de tous les ressorts…": Sylvain Bailly, *Mémoires de Bailly* (2 vols., Paris, Baudouin frères, 1822), II, p.216, 217.

[360] Georges Lefebvre, *The Great Fear of 1789: Rural Panic in Revolutionary France* (trans. Joan White), (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1973), p.7-13, 59-66; Clay Ramsay, *The Ideology of the Great Fear: The Soissonnais in 1789* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), p.81-158; Timothy Tackett, 'Le Grande Peur et le compot aristocratique sous la Révolution française,' *Annals historiques de la Révolution française* 335 (2004), pp.1-17; Michel Vovelle, *The Fall of the French Monarchy, 1787-1792* (trans. Susan Burke), (Cambridge, CUP, 1984), pp.110-14.

According to one observer, efforts to ensure a steady supply of grain meant that all the windmills around Versailles were ordered "to grind grain night and day," since Paris was "menaced by the total dearth of this substance" if supplies "were delayed by even a few hours."[361] As the baron de Besenval later recalled, the "diminution of this essential commodity," created "a fear of the future," and "produced a general ferment." Market places across France, like the elongating queues outside Parisian bakeries, became "scenes of violence" as impatience turned to hunger and then to outright panic.[362]

Panic began to permeate political decision-making, notably in the National Assembly, which reached a state of high neurosis in early-July. With Necker unceremoniously dismissed, the Bastille unexpectedly sacked, and the severed heads of several government officials bobbing about the streets of Paris, rumours began to swirl amongst the deputies that the people were readying themselves to march upon Versailles, intent upon reclaiming their monarch and recalling their representatives. Sessions became tense and skittish: even the dimmest sound of gunshot would have deputies scrambling to the windows, eager to preview the scale of the oncoming onslaught. After 14 July almost every session opened with fevered reports of rural brigandage, aristocratic conspiracy, and imminent starvation; letters arrived on the floor of the Assembly beseeching the deputies to do something – anything – to alleviate the crisis of civil disorder. "We are all in a state of unbelievable agitation," complained one deputy from Dijon; another, from Pontivy, confessed to having become "consumed by anxiety."[363]

By August, dearth and disorder in the countryside had created an overwhelming sense of simultaneity that seemed to scramble the sequential coherence of historical experience. "One cannot believe how the warnings were sounded, on the same day and at the same time, almost everywhere," observed the deputy Michel-René Maupetit on 31 July: and "the warnings that have spread, almost on the same day, throughout the entire kingdom," now threatened to "place all France aflame."[364] In order to satisfy popular impatience and to

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[361] *Mémoires d'Amabert*, cited in Jean Egret, *Necker, ministre de Louis XVI, 1776-1790* (Paris, H. Champion, 1975), p.338: "Des ordres furent envoyés dans tous les moulins des environs de Paris et de Versailles pour moudre jour et nuit. […] Rien ne fut oublié ni épargné pour prévenir la disette totale des subsistances dont Paris était menacé si les convois étaient retardés seulement de quelques heures."

[362] Pierre victor, baron de Besenval, *Mémoires du baron de Besenval* (4 vols., Paris, F. Buisson, 1805-07), III, p.382: "La diminution de cette denrée de première nécessité, la crainte de l'avenir, occasionnèrent des frayeurs et produisirent une fermentation générale." On marketplace violence, and crowd agitation more generally, during the early Revolution, see: John Markoff, 'Violence, Emancipation, and Democracy: The Countryside and the French Revolution,' *The American Historical Review* 100 (2, April 1995), pp.360-86; Jack Censer, Lynn Hunt, 'Imaging the French Revolution: Depictions of the French Revolutionary Crowd,' *The American Historical Review* 110 (1, February 2005), pp.38-45.

[363] Cited in Timothy Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary: The Deputies of the French National Assembly and the Emergence of a Revolutionary Culture (1789-1790)*, (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1996), p.150; on political anxiety, see: Barry M. Shapiro, *Traumatic Politics: The Deputies and the King in the Early French Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009), esp. ch.10.

[364] Michel-René Maupetit (31 July, 1789), *Lettres de Michel-René Maupetit: depute à l'Assemblée nationale constituante, 1789-1791* (2 vols., Paris, Lavalloise, 1901), I, p.210: "Les alarmes qui se sont répandues presque le même jour dans tout le royaume semblent être la suite du complot formé et le complément des projets désastreux

navigate the revolutionary situation, the deputies of the National Assembly attempted a series of political manoeuvres designed to clear the piling-up of events, to comprehend the new synchrony of history. Their deliberations were determined by the temporal and historical dimensions of the gathering crisis; the decisions they took, however, merely exacerbated it.

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"Thus closed the month of July," observed one deputy from the Loire, a month "so stormy" that "it alone contains the events of a century."[365] For several weeks, the urgent fiscal and constitutional demands of the state had served to create a common sense of urgency amongst the deputies.[366] As the panic sweeping the countryside engulfed the National Assembly, so the timeline of deliberation contracted.

On the night of 4 August, time suddenly seemed to evaporate. In an unexpected intervention, the vicomte de Noailles made a dramatic allusion to the plight of the people, who, faced with continuing uncertainty, had "felt obliged to arm themselves," and who "now know no break" upon their energies. "[T]he kingdom," de Noailles warned, was "floating at this moment," caught "between the alternative of the destruction of society or a government which will be admired and emulated throughout Europe."[367] France was in a state of temporal suspension; and unless immediate action was taken, the future integrity of the state could not be guaranteed. As a demonstration of patriotic fraternity, the vicomte proposed the instant abolition of seigneurial rights and the revocation all feudal dues, subject to their redemption. Atop this bonfire of privileges was soon piled clerical tithes, pecuniary immunities, taxation exemptions, and the ordinances of personal servitude, such the *corvée*. For Leguen de Kérangal, deputy from the Basse-Bretagne, these renunciations could not have come soon enough. "The people," he announced, "impatient to obtain justice, and weary of oppression, hastens to destroy these titles, monuments to the barbarity of our ancestors."

> For the sake of peace, hasten to make these promises to France: a general cry may now be heard; you have not a moment to lose; one day of delay occasions new embraces; the fall of empires were announced with less clatter!

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qui devaient mettre toute la France en feu. Car on ne peut imaginer que, dans le même jour et au même instant, presque partout, le tocsin ait résonné…"

[365] Antoine-François Delandine, *Mémorial historiques des États-Généraux: Pendant le mois de Juillet, par un depute de troisième ordre* (Paris, M. Delavigne, 1789), pp.270-71: "Ainsi s'est terminé le mois de juillet, si orageux, si digne d'être considéré attentivement par l'histoire. Lui seul renferme les événemens [sic] d'un siècle."

[366] Michel Biard, *La Révolution Française: Dynamiques, influences, débats, 1787-1804* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2004), p.46.

[367] M. J. Mavidal, M. E. Laurent, eds., *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860, Recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des chambres Françaises*. First series (82 vols., Paris, P. Dupont, 1862-1913), VIII, p.343: "Elles ont cru devoir s'armer contre la force, et aujourd'hui elles ne connaissent plus de frein, […] le royaume flotte, dans ce moment, entre l'alternative de la destruction de la société, ou d'un gouvernement qui sera admiré et suivi de toute l'Europe."

By collapsing the distinction between the immediate and the historical, Kérangal heightened the atmosphere of temporal urgency. Thus the Assembly "would have prevented the razing of chateaus," for example, if it had "been more prompt in declaring that the terrible arms that they contain, *and which have tormented the people for centuries*, were to be destroyed by [a] compulsory reclamation."[368] Unrest in the countryside was given a retroactive rationale: popular clamour was the expression of an understandable impatience with the slowness of national renovation; it was legitimised by "centuries" of oppression [Fig. 6]. One by one, the *haute noblesse* – du Châtelet, d'Aiguillon, de Beauharnais – clambered to the rostrum to

Fig. 6. 'Le Temps Passé, les plus utiles étoient foulés aux pieds, comme ils s'entendent, tailles, impôts, corvées' (1790) http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40248833r

declare their own customary expiration. Delegations of deputies rose to renounce regional privileges, to offer their sympathies with the "impatience" of the people.[369] The rate of

[368] *AP*, VIII, p.345: "Vous eussiez prévenu l'incendie des châteaux, si vous aviez été plus prompts à déclarer que les armes terribles qu'ils contenaient, et qui tourmentent le peuple depuis des siècles, allaient être anéanties par le rachat forcé que vous alliez ordonner." "Le peuple, impatient d'obtenir justice et las de l'oppression, s'empresse à détruire ces titres, monuments de la barbarie de nos pères." "Pour le bien de la paix, hâtez-vous de donner ces promesses à la France: un cri général se fait entendre; vous n'avez pas un moment à perdre; un jour de délai occasionne de nouveaux embrassements; la chute des empires est annoncée avec moins de fracas."
[369] Ibid, p.347-8.

repudiation was intoxicating; Adrien-Marie Legendre sarcastically speculated that some of the orators were drunk.[370]

Despite the prevalent sense of panic, the National Assembly had also demonstrated its potential power: the night of 4 August was a moment, perhaps the first in the entire Revolution, when the manipulation of time enabled the revolutionaries to unclog history. The sudden legislative velocity summoned by the Assembly – an expression of the unitary will of the people, which, on account of its immediacy, made their deliberative activity appear unmediated – sent a kairotic charge through the French state, reconfiguring its future trajectory.[371] On the morning of 5 August, in a state of exhaustion and elation, the Breton deputy Joseph-Michel Pellerin declared that posterity itself would not "believe what the National Assembly did in the space of five hours." Scribbling in his diary, he marvelled at the annihilation of "abuses which had existed for 900 years, and against which a century of philosophy had struggled in vain."[372] The awesome energy of the nation assembled, exercising a power liberated from the traditional restraints of regal supervision, meant that institutions and habits created across centuries now seemed reparable in real-time. "In a single day," reflected Rabaut-Pommier, "the national assembly seemed to have repaired the slowness with which it had been forced to operate by the terrible crisis of the state." In a letter to de Noailles, the publicist Giuseppe Cerutti lauded the night of 4 August as having "separated the present epoch from all those which had preceded it." The vicomte himself had "hastened its march," and personally inaugurated "a memorable epoch" which would "form, in the chain of time, one of those sublime years upon which is suspended the destiny of ten, of twenty, of thirty centuries!"[373] This, in turn, created an ecstatic sense of historical distanciation, which seemed to blast the recent past into a distant oblivion.[374] On 8 August, the *Courrier de Provence* invited its readers to transport themselves "to that time…when the most hideous of depredations formed the ordinary train of events; when, amidst the excess of evil, even the hope in our hearts was extinguished." That "time" was barely four days ago. "[Now] consider at what distance is that event for which we have come to be witnesses!" It seemed entirely appropriate that the nobility and clergy be stripped so suddenly of their

[370] It was "une espèce d'ivresse," he wrote on 5 August; Fèrrieres openly declared himself to be in a state of "patriotic drunkenness": cited, in Simon Schama, *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (London, Penguin Books, 1989), p.372.
[371] The relationship between deliberative speed, popular will and political legitimacy is explored in Perovic, *The Calendar*, pp.94-95.
[372] Tackett, *Becoming a Revolutionary*, p.174.
[373] Giuseppe Cerutti, *Lettre à monsieur le vicomte de Noailles, sur sa motion du 4 août 1789* (Paris, Desenne, 1789), p.8: "il a séparé l'époque présente de toutes celles qui l'ont précédée," p.13: "Cette époque mémorable formera dans la chaîne des temps un de ces anneaux sublimes auxquels est suspendue la destinée de dix, de vingt, de trente siècles."
[374] On the construction of "historical distance," see: Mark Salber Phillips, 'Introduction: Rethinking Historical Distance,' in Mark Salber Phillips, Barbara Caine, Julie Adeney Thomas, eds., *Rethinking Historical Distance* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.1-20.

ancient privileges, since it was "Time," as the *Courier de Madon* observed in November, "that has legitimated all their usurpations."[375]

This was a radical departure. Even within the novel political framework of the Revolution itself, and despite the sacking of the Bastille, the National Assembly had been content to make piecemeal progress. Although the body convened itself as a whole, the distinction of orders, for example, stood intact; in a report compiled by the Committee of the Constitution, delivered on 27 July, it was recommended that the legal registrations of the *parlements* be maintained; even the abolition of the hated *lettres de cachet* remained open to discussion. Within the space of several hours on 4 August all this was swept away.[376] The impetus for this "patriotic delirium," as Joseph-Ignace Guillotin termed it, was the creeping realisation that the National Assembly had too much to do and too little time in which to do it. As Guillotin observed, had similar resolutions been devised by more ordinary procedures – if they had been formulated, proposed, deliberated, amended, and perhaps ultimately obstructed – then the renovation of the state would have taken years, if not decades.[377] Instead, France had been "regenerated in a single night."[378]

Delirium soon turned to despair.[379] The Assembly became almost instantly unstuck in a quagmire of legal and technical detail: on 6 August, for example, deputies spent several hours debating the suppression of dovecotes and the dissolution of regional hunting rights. The abrogation of feudal privileges, meanwhile, had done little to alleviate the ongoing fiscal malaise. In fact, by repudiating the traditional tax regime on 4 August, the Assembly had actually voted to suspend vital streams of revenue. It was not until 25 September, when the new tax base, broadened by the dissolution of fiscal immunities, had received full legislative validation that the mechanisms of tax collection could restart. Receipts from taxes henceforth deemed "illegal," such as the *gabelles*, which had been sliding since the midsummer revolts, largely due to the inability of the *Fermiers généraux* to supervise salt sales without the risk of violence, went into free-fall. When Necker appeared before the Assembly on 7 August, then,

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[375] *Courrier de Madon à l'Assemblée nationale permanente* 1 (2 November, 1789), p.7.
[376] The transcript of the deliberations recorded that decisions were being taken at such immense speed that little time was available to work out how such "salutary projects" might actually implemented: "Les signes de transport et l'effusion de sentiments généraux dont l'Assemblée présentait le tableau, plus vif et plus animé d'heure en heure, n'ont pu qu'à peine laisser le temps de stipuler les mesures de prudence, avec lesquelles il convenait de réaliser ces projets salutaires," cited in Jean-Pierre Hirsch, *La nuit de 4 août* (Paris, Gallimard, 1978), p.165.
[377] Cited in, Michael P. Fitzsimmons, *The Night the Old Regime Ended: August 4, 1789, and the French Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), p.16.
[378] Rabaut-Pommier, *Almanach historique*, p.168: "Il sembloit qu'en une nuit la France alloit être régénérée."
[379] Delirium may have been the problem in the first place; as Mary Kilbourne Matossian has argued, in *Poisons of the Past: Molds, Epidemics, and History* (New Haven, CN., Yale University Press, 1989), pp.81-84, the *Grande Peur* that swept the French countryside in 1789 may have been partly created by the consumption of "bad bread," or, more specifically, by an hallucinogenic wheat fungus, ergot; in times of scarcity, the infected wheat, which would normally have been destroyed, was used to bake bread in order to avoid starvation.

tax payments to the royal treasury could barely cover daily operating costs.[380] The rapidity of constitutional renovation had actually intensified the urgency of the fiscal crisis.

The problem, as Necker had observed during his address on 5 May, lay in the *cahiers*, which instructed the deputies to postpone any discussion of the financial situation until the monarch had ratified a new constitutional settlement. "Several *cahiers*, certainly, demanded that the constitution be settled before any tax or any loan be consented to," observed Necker, "yet could we have foreseen the difficulties that have slowed your work? Could we have foreseen the unprecedented revolution that has come about in the last three weeks?" The political mandates contained within the *cahiers*, which were now hopelessly out-of-date, entangled the multiplying dilemmas of the state. As the deputies soon discovered, attempting to address one component of this multivalent crisis sent all other components into motion, thereby upsetting the capacity of the Assembly to resolve one issue without simultaneously accelerating the urgency of the others. The time-ratios of these crises – that is, the relative rates at which they impeded or endangered their own resolution and thus the progress of the Revolution – were in a continual state of interactive change. As the threat of financial collapse quickened, so the time available to repair or replace the crumbling constitutional fabric of the ancien regime diminished. Yet the rapidity of the constitutional renovation attempted on the 4 August, which instantaneously sequestered traditional tax revenues and burdened the state with massive reimbursements, had simply quickened the prospect of insolvency. Whenever the deputies attempted to advance the Revolution towards its completion, the scale of the task expanded as the time-span available diminished. The Assembly now wore a permanent expression of exhaustion: Maupetit even suggested that unless he and his fellow deputies gave up eating, drinking and sleeping, they could not work any faster.[381] "Everything has been loosened," warned Necker, as France faced the real possibility of societal collapse. "You see the disorders which reign throughout the kingdom! These disorders will grow if you do not take, without delay, salutary and preservative action." Unless the Assembly could discover some means of traversing the financial "interval," then it would not be possible to satisfy even the basis needs of the state. A new loan of 30 million livres was therefore required: "There is not a moment to lose in collecting this sum."[382]

The debate that ensued was explosive. Pétion and Dupont de Nemours would later denounced the rate of interest, set by Necker at a generous 6.5% in order to induce uncertain

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[380] P. M. Jones, *The Peasantry in the French Revolution* (Cambride, CUP, 1998), p.181-83.
[381] M.E. Quereau-Lamerie, ed., 'Lettres de Michel René Maupetit, député à l'Assemblée national constituante (1789-1791),' *Bulletin de la commission historique et archéologique de la Mayenne*, 2 (19, 1903), p.226-7.
[382] *AP*, VIII, p.362: "Tout est relâché," "Ah! Messieurs, que ce terme est nécessaire! Qu'il est pressant! Vous voyez les désordres qui règnent de toutes parts dans le royaume: ces désordres s'accroîtront si vous n'y portez pas, sans délai, une main salutaire et conservatrice," p.361: "Il est vraisemblable qu'avec 30 millions, il sera possible de pourvoir aux besoins indispensables pendant l'intervalle que je viens d'indiquer; mais il n'y a pas un instant à perdre pour rassembler cette somme."

investors, which they saw as an unpatriotic rip-off. In response, the royalist marquis de Lally-Tollendal, warned that interfering with the details of this "indispensible" loan would impair its viability and enact, with startling speed, the "destruction of society" presaged by de Noailles. "Contemplate that if this loan is refused, *in eight days* our cities could be without security, our frontiers without defence…" Lally-Tollendal then collapsed the temporally immediate with the historically massive, declaring that: "We could destroy in one hour the work of fourteen centuries." The historical reverberations of the acceptance or rejection of this financial measure closed in upon the present. This loan "is for now," Lally-Tollendal pleaded, "for this minute, it is for today not tomorrow, it is for this morning not this evening [and] it is prompt means that are needed, simple, recognised, even routine means."[383] With the deputies already surrounded by the ruins of seigneurialism, the temptation towards further destruction was palpable.[384]

Lally-Tollendal, however, had invoked the prevalent perception of temporal compression in order to make financial stability and historical continuity coterminous. Since the alternative to the loan was so odious and the timescale so pressing, the deputies would have to rescue the collapsing financial architecture of the ancien regime – and, by implication, the ancien regime itself – and approve the loan. After all, the "materials" of the ancient "edifice" could not, as Necker had warned, "be dispersed or destroyed, whilst the most able architects are drafting a design."[385] By imitating the "routine means" of ancien regime borrowing practices, the Assembly would ensure the continued integrity of monarchical government, not least because a further extension of indebtedness over time would stretch the imminent dangers of collapse and stabilise the disjuncture between the fiscal past and fiscal future.[386]

There was, then, a terrible paradox at the core of 4 August. Although the deputies had boldly, patriotically declared the dissolution of historical privileges, they had simultaneously assigned themselves the task of reconciling the Revolution with a swathe of French history. Determined to defend private property rights, the deputies had conditioned the abolition of feudal privilege – in particular, the purchase of venal offices – upon a respect for past property transactions. Thus the offices bought under the ancien regime, however corrupt,

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[383] *AP*, VIII, p.367: "Songe-t-on enfin que si l'emprunt est refusé, dans huit jours nos villes peuvent être sans sûreté, nos frontières sans défense, et que nous pouvons détruire en une heure l'ouvrage de quatorze siècles," "C'est pour le moment, Messieurs, c'est pour la minute, c'est aujourd'hui plutôt que demain, ce matin plutôt que ce soir…Ce sont des moyens prompts qu'il faut, des moyens simples, connus, routiniers même…"

[384] On 19 August, Nicolas Ruault wrote in his diary that, "L'Assemblée nationale…a fallu détruire pour réédifier ensuite; elle n'est pas au bout encore de la destruction": Anne Vassal, ed., *Gazette d'un Parisien sous la Révolution: lettres à son frère, 1783-1796* (Paris, Perrin, 1976), p.163.

[385] *AP*, VIII, p.362: "[I]l ne faut pas que les matériaux du bâtiment soient disperses ou anéantis, pendant que les plus habiles architects en composent le dessin."

[386] Borrowing, as the comte d'Antraigues told the Assembly on 7 July, was "la plus désastreuse de toutes les ressources," since "elle ruine l'État même dans les siècles à venir, elle écrase la génération présente, et prépare des malheurs à celles qui lui succéderont": *AP*, VIII, p.366.

would necessarily need to be reimbursed.[387] The indemnities accrued during those delirious five hours pushed the total level of payable national debt beyond one billion livres.[388] No matter how quickly the National Assembly operated, the scale of its task seemed constantly to grow quicker. Lafayette could crow all he wanted about the need "to accelerate the formulation of the constitution," which he believed was "the only means of arresting the troubles," and "responding to the pressing wishes of the people." But a constitution would count for little if, at the very hour of their liberation, the French found themselves lumbered with centuries worth of debt.[389]

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By 24 September the deputies must have thought they were suffering from a collective episode of déjà-vu. Necker – the Revolution's unofficial bearer of bad news – was back. "The public has waited with impatience for the National Assembly to attend to the finances," he told the deputies; but progress, "necessarily slow in such a numerous legislative body, has so prolonged discussion that, after five months, the essential matters of finance have not yet been treated."[390] Thanks to Assembly interference, the loan packages proposed on 7 and 28 August had both failed to garner market interest; Necker therefore proposed a one-off national levy – a "patriotic contribution" – equivalent to one-quarter of all incomes, with an exemption for those of modest means. This would cover all immediate extraordinary expenditures, estimated at around 80 million livres for 1789-90, and prevent the state from drifting terminally into arrears.[391]

The plan was to be achieved promptly – not abruptly. Necker warned that, "everything must be simple in this matter; everything must be *successional*." By meeting pressing present payments – which had arisen from past borrowing, and which would, in

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[387] William Doyle, *Venality: The Sale of Offices in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1996), p.275-311; John Markoff, *Abolition of Feudalism: Peasants, Lords, and Legislators in the French Revolution* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), pp.164-69.
[388] Spang, *Stuff and Money*, p.84.
[389] Gilbert de Motier, marquis de Lafayette, *Mémoires, Correspondances et Manuscrits du Général Lafayette, publiés par sa famille* (6 vols., Paris, H. Founier, 1837-38), II, p.106: "[I]l faut accélérer le travail de la constitution. Oui, Messieurs, c'est là le moyen d'arrêter les troubles, de répandre partout le calme et le bonheur." François-Auguste Alexis Mignet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française depuis 1789 jusqu'en 1814* (2 vols., Paris, 1824), I, p.103: "il fallait non-seulement faire subsister la révolution, mais encore combler l'immense déficit qui retardait sa marche et menaçait son avenir." According to Étienne Dumont, the deputies believed that had been gathered to "réparer toutes les fautes du passé, remédier à toutes les erreurs de l'esprit humain, et assurer le bonheur des siècles futurs," *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau et sur les deux premières assemblées legislatives* (Paris, C. Gosselin, 1832), p.160-1.
[390] Jacques Necker, *Œuvres complètes de M. Necker, publiées par M. le Baron de Staël* (15 vols., Paris, Treuttel and Wurtz, 1821), VII, p.84: "Le public attendoit avec impatience que l'assemblée nationale s'occupât des finances; mais la marche nécessairement lente d'un corps législatif très-nombreux, a tellement prolongé ses discussion, qu'après cinq mois révolus, les affaires essentielles de la finance ne sont point encore traitées."
[391] The best account of the financial crises of the National Assembly during the summer of 1789 is Harris, *Necker and the Revolution of 1789*, pp.675-701.

ordinary circumstances, have been met by borrowing against expected future income – the "patriotic gift" would restore market confidence, "such a necessary link between the present and the future," which presently "denies us its assistance."[392] For Necker and his satellite of supporters, the rapid reestablishment of financial health was an essential element in reordering what they saw as the interlocking epistemological phenomena of past, present and future. They were not concerned with total debt repayment since the disappearance of the debt would simply loosen the financial chain of time that undergirded the transmission of regal legitimacy *across* time.[393]

A fear of further delay found expression in the granting of the royal veto, a device that seemed to many like a political contrivance for forestalling the onset of national renewal. Indeed, if the expiring ancien regime had bequeathed the nation its outstanding debts, a fiscal obligation that seemed to slow constitutional renovation, then the conferral of a veto seemed like the National Assembly acquiescing to the time-drag of the monarchy, thereby enabling the king to obstruct the elusive process of national regeneration should it ever reach completion. Whilst an overwhelming number of the deputies denounced the "absolute" veto as constitutional despotism, the difference between "the absolute veto and the suspensive veto," as Target observed on 4 September, was a "distinction between permanence and periodicity."[394] It was, as Lally-Tollendal acknowledged, a question of whether "a contract that has been sacred for so many generations can bind the present generation."[395] It is remarkable how reflections on temporality so thoroughly permeated contemporary political discourse. On 11 September, when the National Assembly voted overwhelmingly for the "suspensive" compromise, the traditional power of the French monarch was superficially stripped of its "permanence," yet it vitally retained its capacity to "bind," or slow, the pace of revolutionary time: to arbitrate its "periodicity." Louis would soon flex his suspensive authority by remonstrating against the August Decrees. The people, Rabaut-Pommier recalled, were therefore forced to "prejudge the future on the basis of the present."

> We imagined the king obstructing, through a denial without cause, the provisions most useful to the people, […] and since everyone awaited a grand regeneration, one that the court had an interest in delaying, we imagined that, if the king did have a *veto*, he would obstruct all the operations of the National Assembly, and regeneration would become impossible.

[392] Ibid, p.102: "tout doit être simple en ce genre, tout doit être au moins successif, surtout dans un moment où la confiance, ce lien si nécessaire entre le présent et l'avenir, nous refuse son assistance."
[393] Rebecca Spang concludes that, for many deputies opposed to further borrowing, yet determined to rid the nation of its outstanding obligations, the settling of the debt increasingly came to mean "the difference between a largely finished revolution and an ongoing, potentially failed, one": *Money and Stuff*, p.87.
[394] *AP*, VIII, p.565: "Il me paraître [sic] que la distinction entre la permanence et la périodicité est la même que celle du *veto* absolu et du *veto* suspensif."
[395] Cited in Baker, *Inventing the French Revolution*, p.275.

Whilst the suspensive veto would not be activated until the Assembly had formulated the constitution, this fact alone raised "alarm for the future." "We saw that, in a given time, the king would be able to paralyse the legislative body at his pleasure."[396] This association of revolutionary historical time and the illegitimate incursions of royal power found material reality in the form of food. By early October, the escalating price of bread, as well as revulsion for the royal veto, were combined in the popular imagination to rapidly truncate this "given time."[397] On 4 October, Gouverneur Morris recorded the irate deliberations of a crowd gathered outside the Palais-Royal. "Gentlemen," announced one speaker, "we are without bread, and here is the reason: it has only been three days since the king got his suspensive veto, and already the aristocrats have bought up the suspensions and sent grain out of the kingdom."[398]

Consequently, on the 5 October the popular march that many deputies had feared since July finally materialised.[399] At around midday, Mirabeau received word of disturbances in the capital. Conscious of the impending threat that this presented to both the safety of the deputies and the Revolution, Mirabeau leapt from his seat and rushed towards the rostrum, instructing the presiding officer, Jean Joseph Mounier, that, "an army from Paris is marching on the assembly." Mounier shrugged: "I know nothing of this." "Believe me," came the panicked response: "suspend this scandalous session; time is pressing, there is not a minute to lose!"[400] Ahead one of the rain-soaked marching columns strode the radical journalist Jean Antoine Gorsas, who recalled the moment in his journal, *Courrier de Versailles*:

> It is seven in the evening: the strangest things have happened during this disastrous *journée*. Our Hôtel de Ville is pillaged! The disorder! The confusion! Armed women!

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[396] Rabaut-Pommier, *Almanach historique de la Révolution française*, p.174: "Dans cette querelle, comme dans toutes les autres de cette nature, on préjugeoit l'avenir sur le présent; on se figuroit le roi arrêtant, par un refus sans motif, les dispositions les plus utiles au peuple, pour céder aux intrigues de sa cour ou aux intentions de ses ministres. Et comme chacun attendoit une grande régénération que la cour avoir intérêt d'arréter, on imaginoit que, si le roi avoit le *veto*, il arrêteroit toutes les opérations de l'assemblée nationale, et que la régénération seroit impossible."

[397] On the politics of bread, see: Judith A. Miller, 'Politics and Urban Provisioning Crises: Bakers, Police, and Parlements in France, 1750-1793,' in *The Journal of Modern History* 64 (2, June 1992), pp.227-62; and, Richard Munthe Brace, 'The Problem of Bread and the French Revolution at Bordeaux,' *The American Historical Review* 51 (4, July 1946), pp.649-667.

[398] Gouverneur Morris, *Diaries of Gouverneur Morris*, I, p.173; this was not a purely Parisian anxiety: villagers in Nancy, for example, appeared before their regional *parlement* as late as November to complain of the delays hampering registration of the August Decrees: Fitzsimmons, *The Night the Old Regime Ended*, p.144; see: Steven L. Kaplan, *The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Philadelphia, PA., 1982), pp.60-69.

[399] Louis Gottschalk, Margaret Maddox, *Lafayette in the French Revolution: From the October Days Through the Federation* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1973), pp.329-87; Harris, *Necker and the Revolution of 1789*, ch.18; Dominique Godineau, *The Women of Paris and their French Revolution* (trans. Katherine Streip), (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1988), pp.52-118; on contemporary rural uprisings, see: R. B. Rose, 'Tax Revolt and Popular Organization in Picardy, 1789-1792,' *Past and Present* 43 (1969), pp.92-108.

[400] P. J. P. Buchez, *Histoire de l'Assemblée Constituante* (5 vols., Paris, J. Hetzel, 1845-46), II, p.120: "Mounier, Paris marche sur nous. – J'en sais rien. – Croyez-moi ou ne me croyez pas, peu m'importe; mais Paris, vous dis-je, marche sur nous. Trouvez-vous mal ; montez au château; donnez-leur cet avis. Dites, si vous le voulez, que vous le tenez de moi, j'y consens. Mais faites cesser cette controverse scandaleuse; le temps presse, il n'y a pas une minute à perdre!"

> The people raised against the people! […] Terror overcomes all spirits! Pale and trembling figures! A universal revolt! Thousands of armed, nervous citizens march without having predicted that they will march at all! […] Our king may be captured by his loyal subjects! Instantly! This evening! This night![401]

Amidst the forest of exclamation marks and the breathlessness of the description, Gorsas could not imbue ongoing events with any form of sequential coherence. The sense here is not that of acceleration, but of synchrony, of a layering, cascading experience of time. The shift to the present tense reinforces the way in which these micro-moments of historical immensity seemed to be occurring simultaneously and without prefiguration. "Such are the circumstances in which I write." As Étienne Dumont would observe in the immediate aftermath of 5-6 October, "the rapidity of events was such that one sensation was already erased by another."[402]

To the sound of musket-fire, Mirabeau called upon the Assembly "to invite patriotism to second their measures" and to finally approve the patriotic gift.[403] In the mere moments before the Assembly was besieged by the oncoming crowd, the delegates would either enable the nation to "raise itself to a most glorious destiny, or rush into a gulf of misfortune." In this rapidly abbreviating temporal schema, the primary promise of the Revolution – "liberty" – "would have only a second in view before escaping us," before being subsumed by the centuries to come. Unless state finances could be put in order, the Revolution itself would elapse even before regeneration had begun. Mirabeau therefore saw the "patriotic tax" as a financial and political panacea since it appeared to operate with such historical immediacy: "It only takes the sacrifice of a moment," he declared, "this slight reparation of the errors and faults of an era marked by our political servitude."[404] This novel fiscal instrument, which seemed to obviate any recourse to borrowing whilst simultaneously evoking patriotic self-sacrifice, could bridge the deficit at a single stroke, and would, in turn, tear through "the fiscal timeknot" inherited from the ancien regime.[405]

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[401] Jean Antoine Gorsas, *Courrier de Versailles à Paris et de Paris à Versailles* (6 October, 1789), pp.1-2.
[402] Dumont, *Souvenir sur Mirabeau*, p.184: "la rapidité des évènemens était telle qu'une impression était toujours effacée par un autre."
[403] On gift-giving, morality and patriotism during the early Revolution, see: Charles Walton, 'Reciprocity and the French Revolution,' in Alex Fairfax-Cholmeley, Colin Jones, eds., 'New Perspectives on the French Revolution,' *e-France* 4 (2013), pp.25-30.
[404] *AP*, IX, p.352-53: "Les députés à l'Assemblée nationale suspendent, quelques instants, leur travaux, pour exposer à leurs commettants les besoins de l'Etat, et inviter le patriotisme à seconder des mesures réclamées au nom de la patrie en péril," "la nation va s'élever aux plus glorieuses destinées, ou se précipiter dans un gouffre d'infortunes," "La liberté n'aurait lui un instant à nos yeux que pour s'éloigner, en nous laissant le sentiment amer que nous ne somme pas dignes de la posséder!," "il ne faut qu'un sacrifice d'un moment, […] cette légère expiation pour les erreurs et les fautes d'un temps marqué par notre servitude politique."
[405] Spang, *Money and Stuff*, p.66.

The royal family were escorted from Versailles with such haste that they had scarcely time to take a change of clothes. According to the princess de Lamballe, they departed without consulting "any of the Ministers, military or civil, or the National Assembly, by whom they were followed." After the slow drudgery of their procession to Paris, they were "obliged to ask permission" for their wardrobes to be transferred to the Tuileries. "What a situation for an absolute king and queen, which, *but a few hours previous*, they had been!"[406]

When the National Assembly seemed incapable of expediting the Revolution, the people provided their own historical propulsion. Although the deputies were legally representative of the nation, they were not the nation incarnate. The spontaneous march of the Parisian crowds mirrored an emergent belief, which would quickly become incontrovertible, that the ambitions of the Revolution could be accelerated through the sudden manifestation of the unitary will of the people.[407] "This revolution," observed one deputy from Toulouse, referring to the events of 5-6 October, "has taken place in less than twenty-four hours."[408] Four days later, a delegation from the Paris Commune interrupted a session of the Assembly to congratulate the people on their participation in "the memorable events that the past days have seen process [*succéder*] with such rapidity," and which were responsible for placing France "in order." Since the deliberative capacity of the National Assembly had proven too slow to alleviate the needs of the nation, the people had intervened to exert their own instantaneous will. The recent risk of dearth and despotism became a distant memory, for the forcible relocation of Louis, "the citizen king" – or *le roi boulanger*, as the crowds chanted – had seen "abundance restored amongst us."[409]

[406] Madame du Hausset*, Secret memoirs of the courts of Louis XV and Louis XVI*, II, p.151-2.
[407] This is discussed with reference to the fall of the monarch on 10 August, 1792, in, Sanja Perovic, *The Calendar*, p.95; Kevin Olsen, *Imagined Sovereignties: The Power of the People* (Cambridge, CUP, 2016), pp.54-92.
[408] Augustin Pous, *Le Curé Pous: correspondance inédite d'un membre de l'assemblée constituante, 1789-1791* (Lyon, Germain, 1880), p.32. "Cette révolution s'est faite dans moins de vingt-quatre heures."
[409] *AP*, IX, p.405: "exprimer ses sentiments sur les mémorables événements que les jours passés ont vu succéder avec tant de rapidité." "Tout paraît rentré dans l'ordre." "L'abondance a reparu parmi nous, la paix l'accompagne: hâtez-vous, nous vous en conjurons; hâtez-vous de vous réunir à ce Roi citoyen, dont vous vous êtes déclarés inséparables, et vous comblerez nos espérances!"

3: Revolutionary Experimentation with Time and History: warpspeeds and time travel during the American Revolution, 1783-87, and the French Revolution, 1791-94

In May 1794, Maximilien Robespierre appeared before the National Convention to congratulate his fellow deputies on having propelled the French Republic several centuries into the future. "The people of France," he marveled, "seem to have advanced two thousands years beyond the rest of the human species."[410] Fourteen years earlier, in June 1780, John Adams was despatched to the Dutch Republic, charged with achieving diplomatic recognition and financial aid for the American cause. From his modest lodgings in Amsterdam, Adams observed how the advent of the American Revolution, though still precariously established, seemed to have overset the pace and pattern of history. "The progress of society," he observed, "will be accelerated by centuries by this revolution."[411]

It was R. R. Palmer who first alighted upon a comparison between Robespierre and Adams, arguing that a similar commitment to "the moral republic" may, in separate circumstances, have turned the "impatient" Adams into a Jacobin.[412] These were not hyperbolic ramblings: they testify to the awesome sense of historical compression wrought by revolution. Yet such extreme conceptualisations of progress do not conform, as Koselleck contends, to a "self-accelerating temporality." Rather, they seem to break it: Robespierre and Adams do not claim that their respective Revolutions "abbreviated the spaces of experience" so much as obliterated them altogether.[413] This chapter demonstrates how revolutionary reconceptualizations of time and history frustrated the supposed shift towards linearity that is characteristic of modern temporality.[414] This was less about the speed – or dynamics – of historical time, and more about its shape – or geometrics. The immediate-term experience of revolution did not see the arrow of time replace the cycle of history. Instead, the "timeline" of historical events appeared malleable, fungible, and open to experimentation.

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[410] Maximilien Robespierre, *Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur* (7 May, 1794), XX, p.404: "Le peuple français semble avoir devancé de deux mille ans les reste de l'espèce humaine…"

[411] Viewed in temporal terms, the Revolution had also overset classical precedent: "The Romans never saw but one caudine forks in their whole history. Americans have shown the Britons two in one war": John Adams to Abigail Adams (18 December, 1781), in Butterfield, Friedlaender, eds., *The Adams Papers*. Family Correspondence, IV, pp.256-66.

[412] R. R. Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (2 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1959), II, pp.124-25: the reason for the divergence, Palmer argues is that, "Adams already lived in a kind of Arcadia, as contrasted, at least, with Europe. Robespierre did not. No doubt Adams had a saving grace of scepticism that would have held him back from Robespierre's course, but it is intriguing to speculate on whether John Adams, an impatient, irritable, easily frustrated but very determined man, with no very high opinion of his contemporaries, was not the one among the American founders who, under pressures such as those in France, could have most easily turned into a 'Jacobin.'"

[413] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.17.

[414] On the advent of modernity and non-linear time, see: Allegra Fryxell, 'Split temporalities and conceptions of time in Western Europe and America, c.1890-1940' (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Cambridge, 2015), esp. introduction.

As the Revolutionary War reached its conclusion in 1783, many Americans reconceived the propulsive power of revolutionary politics as a malevolent, not a liberating force: by 1786, they had already engaged in a series of unsuccessful political experiments to de-temporalise the experience of history. As the French Revolution radicalised, overturning a millennium-old monarchy in 1792, factional disputes increasingly centred on the belief that the project was incapable of reaching a critical velocity, almost as though history were impeding time.[415] In short, the considerations of history and time were indissociable from the complexion of revolutionary forms of power. Ultimately, the political programmes of the French and American Revolutionaries were designed to obviate the operations of time: either because its effects appeared too protracted, threatening to collapse the progress of the French Revolution into duration; or because the rapid onset of the new and unforeseen, which ceaselessly confronted the nascent American Republic with disintegration, appeared to liquefy the plane of historicity, enfeebling the operations of political power. This chapter therefore provides a brief history of the failed attempts to control historical time in the immediate aftermath of revolution.

I. Instant Time:

The task of devising a new French constitution was only supposed to take a few months.[416] In fact, when Necker appeared before the National Assembly on 7 August 1789, he anticipated that two months would be sufficient. Two days later, Mounier seconded the sentiment, but set the duration in weeks. "We all believed," observed the comtesse de Genlis, "that the work would be completed in under a month; it took very much longer."[417] It was the prevalence of this belief that helps to explain why so many of *cahiers* failed to stipulate a fixed term limit on the mandate of the Estates-General. It was only after the precipitous events of 14 July that the Assembly, increasingly wary of popular impatience, decided to sit in permanent session, debating "night and day until the Constitution is completed." It would be in vain, for despite their hyperactivity, every time the deputies made progress, the duration of the Revolution appeared to expand. In an attempt to resolve the mounting constitutional and fiscal crisis confronting France, the deputies of the National Assembly began engaging in imaginative reconceptualizations of time and history. Fearful that the accumulated errors of several

[415] These contentions are elaborated below and are designed to contextualize, nuance and occasional contradict many of the ideas adumbrated by Reinhardt Kosseleck: see his *Futures Past*, pp.9-25, 43-57, 93-104, 255-75.
[416] Gilbert Shapiro, Timothy Tackett, Philip Dawson, John Markoff, *Revolutionary Demands: A content analysis of the Cahiers de Doléances of 1789* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1998), 99-113.
[417] Necker and Mounier, cited in Bernard Adolphe Granier de Cassagnac, *Histoire des causes de la révolution française* (3 vols., Bruxelles, Auguste Pagny, 1850), II, p.202; Genlis, *Œuvres complètes*, III, p.83: "On croyoit alors que ce travail seroit terminé sous peu de mois; il fut beaucoup plus long."

centuries of despotism and venality would require several further centuries of repair work, the deputies scrambled for shortcuts. Increasingly desperate to quicken the completion of their mandate, they decided that the Revolution would become interminable if it could not be concluded *instantly*.

The problem was outlined by the marquis de Montesquiou-Fézensac, a member of the Assembly's Finance Committee, who, in 1790, detailed the constitutional and financial time-bind inhibiting the completion of the Revolution. Unless the Assembly could find a means of recompensing defunct officeholders, could the state ever seek to "close its accounts with all the stakeholders in the public purse?" In his despair, Montesquiou asked: "How, finally, can we reach the point where order can be restored," where personal and public safety could once again be guaranteed and the work of the constitution completed, "if our lack of funds forces us to live by our industry hitherto, and to arrive indebted on the very day of our liberation?" Freedom, in short, would not replace tyranny "when, at the moment we wish to change the regime, we will have before us an outstanding debt of 200 million livres." Without the immediate reimbursement of the abolished sinecures, pensions, and offices – in effect, the entire architecture of ancien regime clientage – how could France hope to "emerge from the servitude in which we find ourselves?" As Montesquiou rightly recognised, this inherited indebtedness formed "an unbreakable chain" between the fiscal past and present. The duration of regeneration was therefore in direct proportion to the scale of French history: that is, the time period required to repay the royal debt and reinvent the constitutional basis of France would be protracted by the multiple errors of the past. In the form of the royal debt, the extent of this "pastness" appeared infinite. If the vestiges of feudalism – "the *gabelle*, the *aides*, and the reserved rights" – had necessarily to "cease to exist at the moment marked for our regeneration by your wisdom," then the work of the Revolution would need to be accelerated beyond all previous comprehension.[418]

In the summer of 1789, the notion of instantaneous debt amortization seemed fanciful; twelve months later and the Assembly was placing it under active consideration. On 27 August 1790, Montesquiou rose before the Assembly once again to deliver his findings on

[418] *AP*, X, p.91: "Comment mettre de l'ordre dans les dépenses si on manque d'argent comptant pour ses marchés, et si on ne peut jamais terminer ses comptes avec tous les dépositaires des deniers public?" "Comment enfin atteindre au moment où l'ordre pourra renaître, si faute de fonds il fallait vivre d'industrie jusque-là, et arriver obéré au jour de la libération?," pp.91-92: "Comment mettre une administration paternelle à la place d'une administration tyrannique, lorsqu'on aura toujours devant les yeux une dette exigible de 200,000,000 livres au moment où l'on voudrait changer de régime?," p.92: "La gabelle, les aides et les droits réservés doivent cesser d'exister à l'instant marqué par votre sagesse pour notre régénération, et nous ne vous proposerons de remplacer ces impôts…" On revolutionary debt disputes, see: Paul Cheney, *Revolutionary Commerce: Globalization and the French Monarchy* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2010), pp.1-20; Michael Sonenscher, 'The Nation's Debt and the Birth of the Modern Republic,' *Political Studies* 42 (1994), pp.166-231; D. R. Weir, 'Tontines, Public Finance, and Revolution in France and England, 1688-1789,' *Journal of Economic History* 49 (1, March 1989), pp.95-124; Florian Schui, 'Review: Les batailles de l'impôt: Consentement et résistance de 1789 à nos jours,' *The English Historical Review* 127 (2012), p.1607-09.

the sale of the *biens nationaux*, the confiscated tracts of ecclesiastical, crown and émigré lands. During the previous November, the *ci-devant* bishop of Autun, Charles-Maurice Talleyrand, had argued that since the clergy no longer formed a privileged corporate body its properties had necessarily to be returned to state control and placed at the disposal of the nation.[419] Conscious of the projected value of these properties, estimated in excess of three billion livres, Montesquiou made his case. If France were to resolve its debts gradually, "we would actually need to increase taxes," he observed, in order to cover debt interest payments. As a consequence, the "primary goal" of the Revolution – "the relief of the people – "would prove only a chimerical fantasy," an ambition eternally deferred into a financial future that would forever mirror the indebtedness of the feudal past. However, if "it were possible to exchange, *in one instant*, the greater part, or even all, of these domains against the entirety of the exigible debt, the state would no longer be constrained by forced repayments." This act, Montesquiou continued, would beget such a sudden state of prosperity, "a prosperity that was far beyond our hopes," that the financial burdens accumulated over centuries would be instantly lifted. The gradual liquidation of the debt and the protracted reimbursement of venality would cease to linger, acquiring further grievances by the day, enabling the Revolution to erase the institutional and customary claims of the past upon the present. "It is so to accelerate the sale of the national domains that you must attach yourselves with an obstinacy that overcomes all obstacles." This, Montesquiou marvelled, "would have the singular advantage of terminating in a single day the work of half a century."[420]

Such sentiments emerged from a sustained exposure to revolutionary time. On the night of 4 August, for example, the National Assembly had – however accidentally and haphazardly – affected a genuine sense of rupture in the historical development of the nation. As Bailly recalled, "[t]he feudal regime which weighed down the people for centuries had been destroyed in one fell swoop, in a single instant." The Assembly "had, in a few hours, done more for the people than the wisest and most enlightened nations had done in several centuries."[421] As the second edition of the political journal *Nouvelles éphémérides* observed four days later, on 8 August 1789, the Revolution seemed to be proceeding through intermittent, instantaneous bolts of popular and legislative energy:

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[419] Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution: From its Origins to 1793* (trans. Elizabeth Moss Evanson), (London, Routledge, 2001), p.154.

[420] *AP*, XVIII, pp.354-5. "S'il était possible d'échanger, dans un instant, la plus grande partie, ou même la totalité de ces domaines contre la totalité de la dette exigible, l'État ne serait plus astreint à des remboursements forcés." "C'est donc à accélérer la vente des domaînes nationaux qu'il faut vous attacher avec cette obstination qui surmonte tous les obstacles." "[I]l aurait le singulier avantage de terminer en un jour l'ouvrage d'un demi-siècle." Emphasis added.

[421] *Mémoires de Bailly*, II, p.216: "Le régime féodal qui pesait sur le peuple et depuis des siècles, a été détruit d'un seul coup et en un instant. L'Assemblée nationale en quelques heures a plus fait pour le peuple que les nations les plus sages et les plus éclairées n'ont fait en plusieurs siècles."

> "*One moment* [4 August] saw despotism fall and liberty reborn; *in a moment* the Bastille was taken, and it took *only a moment* to return patriotism, harmony and generosity to a place where pride, discord and self-interest seemed to have affixed themselves never to leave."

These "rare events," affected in such a bewilderingly brief span of time, seemed to "confound all human foresight."[422] Institutions, customs and habits that had been established over the course of centuries were being brushed aside in the course of mere "moments." Feats of immense historical consequence, meanwhile, were reduced to almost insignificant temporal durations. The Revolution could be charted not by its gradual – or even its gradually accelerating – progress, but through its epic *journées*, single days of time-bending magnitude.[423]

As Mirabeau observed, the partial sale of *biens nationaux* in December 1789 had been "only a passing remedy, and not a complete cure." Yet, confronted with "the abyss," France had nevertheless alighted upon a means that might "fill it." Over the preceding year, many of the deputies had come to realise that selling the confiscated lands through ordinary market mechanisms was a cumbersome, time-consuming process: the issuing of assignats as, initially, a collateral quasi-currency would expedite matters by handing the government immediate control over the estimated value of the *biens nationaux*. The extension of "this exercise could no longer be delayed." The reason, Mirabeau announced, was that "the general reestablishment" of government credit often produced "momentary embarrassments," which naturally inhibited "credit from closely following expectation."

> Thus, the time which elapses rapidly restores the same demands; these demands restore the same distress; and as long as we do not establish, on a recognised basis of strength, a vast operation, a general measure, which *places us above events*, we will become eternal playthings…[424]

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[422] *Nouvelles éphémérides de l'Assemblée nationale, ou, Correspondance d'un député à l'Assemblée nationale, avec un membre du parlement d'Angleterre* 2 (8 August, 1789), p.18: "Un moment a vu tomber le despotisme et renaître la liberté ; un moment a emporté la Bastille et il n'a fallu qu'un moment pour ramener le patriotisme, la concorde et la générosité dans un lieu où l'orgueil, la discorde et l'intérêt semblaient s'être fixés pour n'en sortir jamais. Ce sont là de ces événements rares, qui confondent toute la prévoyance humaine." Emphasis added.

[423] Henry Brougham would later recall the Revolution as a time "when each week staggered under the load of events that had formerly made centuries to bend": *Historical Sketches of Statesmen who flourished in the time of George III, to which is added Remarks on Party, and an Appendix* (2nd ed., Paris, A. & W. Galignani, 1839), p.360.

[424] *AP*, XVIII, p.356: "[C]et exercice ne pouvait plus être retardé. A l'excédant des dépenses sur les recettes ordinaires, se joignait un déchet énorme des revenues, qui s'augmentait de jour en jour par l'état déplorable du royaume, et la stagnation de toutes les affaires." "[L]e rétablissement général, auquel nous travaillons, doit nécessairement produire des embarras momentanés, qui empêchent le crédit de suivre de près l'espérance" "Ainsi, le temps qui s'écoule ramène assez promptement les mêmes besoins ; ces besoins ramènent la même détresse ; et tant que nous n'établirons pas, sur la base dont nous avons reconnu la solidité, une opération vaste, une mesure générale, qui nous mette au-dessus des événements, nous en serons les éternels jouets…" See: Rebecca L. Spang, 'The Ghost of Law: Speculating on Money, Memory and Mississippi in the French Constituent Assembly,' *Historical Reflections/Refléxions Historiques* 31 (1, Spring 2005), pp.3-25.

The sale of the *biens nationaux*, and their rapid conversion into assignats, appeared to Mirabeau like a temporal panacea, a fiscal manoeuvre that would succeed where the "patriotic gift" had not. Here was a "simple" and "active" means of "placing in movement so many other means," which would suddenly see France "pass" from "the deplorable state of the kingdom and the stagnation of all affairs" towards "the new order of things" – to "its slow and happy effects" – by "supporting our existence" in the immediate term, "and by prolonging public goodwill in favour of the Constitution, which does not hold for long against such misery." Selling the *biens nationaux* would therefore buy time for the constitution; but it would also lift France "above events," instantly transporting the nation outside ordinary time, and towards the conclusion of the Revolution – which, in late 1790, remained the completion of the constitution and the repayment of the royal debt. In this way, the nation would leapfrog the five decades of constitutional toil that Montesquiou had otherwise foreseen. The dichotomous relationship that many historians have observed between the early, moderate, and later, radical revolutionaries does not hold. It was not simply the case that whilst those such as Robespierre envisioned an "accelerated" Revolution capable of breaking "the bounds of the possible," that others such as Mirabeau protested that it was beyond their capacity "to all of a sudden hatch a new race."[425]

Here were the mental materials – derived from the collective experience of revolutionary temporality – that would enable contemporaries to envisage a mode of revolutionary action that could affect vast yet instantaneous historical change. From the very first months of the Revolution, participants did not merely observe alterations in historical time; they actively sought to reshape it. The consequences of this conceptualisation of instantaneity were almost exclusively pitched in positive terms: the *biens nationaux*, claimed the Assembly, were to become "the salvation of the state," whilst the assignats, the paper bonds issued against the confiscated properties, were described as the "saviour of France." In her numismatic account of the Revolution, Rebecca Spang has rightly challenged the received wisdom that dismisses the assignats as simply "a debacle," instead uncovering nuance in the ideas that motivated this policy. She nevertheless views the conversion of confiscated lands into currency as part of a broad "effort to stop, slow or stabilize a revolutionary situation."[426] The undisputed desire, of course, was the timely completion of the Revolution. However, the fiscal measures enacted by the Assembly between 1789-91 actually seem to have been designed to quicken – not slow or stabilize – the Revolution. In fact, the discourse of the Revolution increasing became obsessed with the possibility of historical hyperspeed.

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[425] Mona Ozouf, *L'homme régénéré: essais sur la Révolution française* (Paris, Gallimard, 1989), pp.118-19.
[426] Spang, *Stuff and Money*, p.59; for the standard interpretation of the sale of *biens nationaux* and the assignats, see: François Crouzet, *La Grande Inflation* (Paris, Fayard, 1993), p.567; Manuela Albertone, 'Le débat sur le credit public en France et la naissance des assignats,' *Économies et Sociétés* 24 (1990), pp.405-29; Marcel Marion, *Histoire financière de la France depuis 1715* (6 vols., Paris, A. Rousseau, 1927-31), I, p.109.

II. Time Travel

"*Why can I not see in anything other than a dream, this so desired Time that my wishes call! Hasten! Come enlighten the happiness of the world!*"

Louis-Sébastien Mercier, preface to *L'An 2440; rêve, s'il en fût jamais* (1771)[427]

The Revolutionary era inaugurated a series of intellectual and literary experimentations with the possibility of time travel. In France, it was conceived as a potentially liberating opportunity to reshape the oppressive political conditions of the present; in America, it acted as a form of therapeutic escape, as a reassurance against the terrifying prospect of an entirely open future.[428]

In *L'An 2440; rêve, s'il en fût jamais* (1771), the sensational, and eventually censored novel by Louis-Sébastien Mercier, the literary construct of time travel was born. The story is simple. Following a philosophical dispute about the contemporary iniquities of Parisian life, the unnamed protagonist of *L'An 2440* falls into a deep sleep, only to awake in the Paris of the future, aged seven hundred. As a kindly stranger escorts the decrepit time traveller around the city, offering him a vision of pristine streets, civic virtue, and a society denuded of both poverty and aristocracy, Mercier titillated all the fantasies of the social and political reformers of his own time. Since seventeenth-century utopian fiction had eschewed temporal similarity in favour of spatial difference, taking readers on *voyages imaginaires* to distant and unfamiliar lands, it also seemed incapable of communicating with history. In *L'An 2440*, by contrast, time firmly takes the place of space: by trans-locating his protagonist to a future Paris, Mercier depicts the process of temporal, not topographical rupture; Mercier replaces utopia with uchronia.[429] One consequence of this uchronic vision is that Mercier firmly situates the temporal zone of his political idealism inside history; indeed, the narrative conceit is "an extrapolation of the historical process itself." This injection of historicity lifted the conceptual firewall separating the possible and the actual. Consequently, the 'idealised' future

[427] Louis Sébastien Mercier, *L'An 2440, Rêve s'il en fut jamais* (Paris, La Découverte & Syros, 1999), p.26: "Que ne puis-je te voir autrement qu'en songe, année si désirée et que mes vœux appellent! Hâte-toi! Viens éclairer le bonheur du monde!"

[428] Jonathan Lamb, 'Fantasies of Paradise,' in Martin Fitzpatrick, Peter Jones, Christa Knellwolf, Ian McCalman, eds., *The Enlightenment World* (London, Routledge, 2004), pp.521-35; Henry Steele Commager, *The Empire of Reason: How Europe Imagined and America Realized the Enlightenment* (New York. NY., Anchor Press, 1977); Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1994), pp.150-92; Carl J. Richard, *The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1994), pp.196-231; Charles W. J. Withers, *Placing the Enlightenment: Thinking Geographically about the Age of Reason* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2007), pp.27-34, 45-49, 148-66; Thomas Ahnert, 'The Atlantic Enlightenment and German Responses to the American Revolution, c.1775 to c.1800,' in Susan Manning, Francis D. Cogliano, eds., *The Atlantic Enlightenment* (Burlington, VT., Ashgate Publishing Group, 2008), pp.97-112.

[429] Bronislaw Baczko, *Lumières de l'Utopie* (Paris, Payot, 1978), p.154.

and 'oppressive' present shared the same timestream, the latter leading inexorably – almost as a process of liberation – to the former.[430] This temporalisation of utopia presupposed that contemporaries were living within a process directed towards beneficial future transformation. Devoid of any imaginative reference to scientific or technological innovation, however, Mercier chose to place especial emphasis upon the future political and socio-moral progress of mankind. What he envisions in *L'An 2440*, then, is "an ameliorated present" situated in a realisable future, the source of which exists "not only in the realm of the fictive but in the empirically redeemable present."[431]

Mercier does not merely alter the destination, however, but also the means of getting there. Though the reader remains unaware of how the slumbering protagonist arrives at the distant future, the journey itself cannot be located outside the flow of historical time. The distance between the temporal zones of present and future may be vast, but their connection remains chronologically comprehensible and thus causally connected, even though this process of temporal and historical dislocation remains occluded.[432] *L'An 2440* cannot therefore be properly classified under the category of enlightenment philosophical literature. It is something apart: Mercier, after all, entirely distorted one of its central tenets – the process of progress. At the Sorbonne in 1750, Turgot presented his *Discours* on the inexorable progress of human history. This *histoire universelle*, which he saw as proceeding along a single historical pathway towards a perfected future, was to be a slow march.[433] Although his temporal perception of progress was not fixed, alternating between "periods of rest and unrest," he nevertheless believed that humankind would continue "advancing, although at a slow pace, towards greater perfection." These "slow and successive progressions," moreover, might meander "through a thousand detours," altered occasionally and imperceptibly by "chance [and] circumstances" far more than by the "efforts of the human mind."[434] Time was the indisputable vector of progress, he insisted - its dimensions

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[430] Paul K. Alkon, *Origins of Futuristic Fiction* (Athens, GA., University of Georgia Press, 1987), p.128; this contrast between the reader's present and the time traveller's future is reinforced through the copious use of footnotes, which Mercier uses to highlight the socio-political dissimilarities of the two cities.

[431] Annie Cloutier, 'Penser l'espace, pense le temps au siècle des lumières: le cas Mercier ou la naissance de l'uchronie,' in Cloutier, Catherine Dubeau, Pierre-Marc Gendron, eds., *Savoirs et fins de la représentation sous l'ancien régime: actes des coloques jeunes chercheurs du Cercle Interuniversitaire d'Étude sur la République des Lettres, 2001-2002* (Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2005), pp.221-34, here: p.231; Reinhardt Koselleck, 'The Temporalization of Utopia,' in Presner et al., eds., *Practice of Conceptual History*, pp.84-99, here: p.88.

[432] Robert Darnton, *The Forbidden Best-Sellers of Pre-Revolutionary France* (W.W. Norton & Co., New York, NY., 1996), p.125.

[433] Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1640-1752* (Oxford, OUP, 2006), p.549.

[434] Anne-Robert Turgot, *Œuvres de Turgot et documents le concernant, avec biographic et notes* (5 vols., Paris, F. Alcan, 1913-23), ed. G. Schelle, I, p.208: "Plus heureuses les nations dont les lois n'on point été établies par de si grands génies; elles se perfectionnent du moins, quoique lentement, et par mille détours, sans principes, sans vues, sans projet fixe; le hasard, les circonstances ont souvent conduit à des lois plus sages que les recherches et les efforts de l'esprit humain"; see: Jules Delavaille, *Essai sur l'histoire de l'idée du progrès jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle* (New York, NY., Verlag, 1977), pp.388-69.

could not be sidestepped, even if it was historically unidirectional.[435] Over the course of the late-eighteenth century, and especially after the commencement of the French Revolution, this theorisation of *perfectionnement* underwent temporalisation.

Contrast, for example, Turgot's steady formulation from 1750 with Robespierre's call-to-arms of 10 May, 1793: "The progress of human reason prepared this great revolution," he told the National Convention, "and imposed upon you is the special task of accelerating it." Whilst Robespierre heartily acknowledged the indebtedness of the Revolution to the "progress" that eighteenth century philosophical inquiry had "prepared" for "human reason," the people of France – who, though "born for happiness and liberty," remained "everywhere enslaved and miserable" – could wait no more. If society possessed, "as its aim," the "perfection of its being," then the "time had come" to complete this "duty," to fulfil the "true destiny" of France.[436] This was no longer a matter of awaiting the gradual amelioration of civic institutions; the perfection of humankind was an explicitly human task, one that would drift if left unattended.[437] It would require a total restructuring of the objective experience of historical time. And whereas Turgot had insisted that, "all ages" were "linked one to the other by a chain of causes and effects, which tie the present state of the world to those which preceded it," Robespierre rejected the entire premise of a "chain of time."[438] For Mercier, the "chain" is not smashed; it is simply foreshortened, and the protagonist blasted through a temporally truncated history towards the future. This imaginative *coup de théâtre* situates *L'An 2440* outside the literary and philosophical genre of *perfectionnement*, at least as it was comprehended by Turgot, and later by Condorcet in his *Tableau historique* (1794).[439]

As the novel raced through twenty-five editions, traversing even the Atlantic to reach the writing desks of Jefferson and Washington, *L'An 2440* found an audience with an active appetite for future prognostication.[440] In France, it seemed to satisfy a contemporary

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[435] See: Richard E. Schade, 'Introduction to Practicing Progress: The Promise and Limitations of Enlightenment,' and Laurie Johnson, 'Enlightenment According to Don Alfonso: Perilous Progress in Mozart's *Cosi fan tutte*,' and Richard T. Gray, 'Economic Value-Theory and Literary Culture in Late-Eighteenth Century Germany: The Debate over Physiocracy,' in Richard E. Schaude, Dieter Sevin, eds., *Practicing Progress: The Promise and Limitations of Enlightenment* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 2007), pp.13-20, 59-74, 93-108.

[436] Maximilien Robespierre, 'Séance du 10 Mai, 1793,' in Bouloiseau, Marc, Soboul, Albert, eds., *Œuvres de Maximilien Robespierre* (10 vols., Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1967), IX, p.495: "les progrès de la raison humaine ont préparé cette grande révolution, et c'est à vous qu'est spécialement imposé le devoir de l'accélérer." "Pour remplir votre mission, il faut faire précisément tout le contraire de ce qui a existé avant vous."

[437] François-Emmanuël Boucher, '*Philosophes*, Anticlericalism, Reactionaries, and Progress in French Enlightenment Historiography,' in Sophie Bourgault, Robert Sparling, eds., *A Companion to Enlightenment Historiography* (Leiden, Brill, 2013), pp.373-400; Daniel Brewer, *The Enlightenment Past: Reconstructing Eighteenth-Century French Thought* (Cambridge, CUP, 2008), pp.49-74.

[438] Turgot, *Œuvres de Turgot*, I, p.32: "Tous les âges sont enchaînés les uns aux autres par une suite de causes et d'effets qui lient l'état présent du monde à tous ceux qui l'ont précédé."

[439] On Condorcet and progress, see: David William Bates, *Enlightenment Aberrations: Error and Revolution in France* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2002), pp.73-97; on *perfectionnement* as French Revolutionary trope, see: Bernard Deloche, Jean-Michel Leniaud, *La Culture des sans-culottes* (Paris, Les Editions de Paris, 1989), pp.150-73.

[440] As Darnton observes: "It is a crucial work for anyone who wants to understand what appealed to a readership so different from our own": *The Forbidden Best-Sellers*, p.115.

frustration with the tedious gradations of historical time. At Passy, in 1783, Franklin expressed his disappointment at having been "born so soon, since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known 100 years hence."[441] Mercier offered the French reading public the opportunity of imaginative time travel, and did so by explicitly making that journey a positive passage from present to future. For Franklin's fellow Americans, by contrast, the future was filled not with promise, but foreboding.[442]

In 1785 an anonymous prose poem, entitled *The Golden Age; or, future glory of North American discovered*, followed the time travels of Celadon, a simple American yeoman.[443] Like Mercier's unnamed explorer, Celadon slips into a "drowsy trance," only to be awoken by an angelic figure who declares that his "business is to resolve certain doubts" with respect the "interests of American freedom and independency," and to "give you intelligence respecting several as yet unknown events, whereby, you and others may be comforted." Celadon, however, does not awake to find himself temporally trans-located, but is instead offered an alternative vision of the future. Escorted to "the top of an exceeding high mountain," the Angel washes Celadon's eyes with a "crystalline elixir" that so strengthens his "visive faculty" that he may "distinctly view the whole continent from shore to shore." Whilst Celadon glimpses the "fertile fields," "blooming forests," and undiscovered lands reserved for the citizens of America, he is also the privileged witness to the the unfolding of the American future. He observes the construction of simple dwellings and the emigration of farmers; the land provides a means of corralling indigenous peoples, who "in due time" will become "polite, wealthy, and pious"; the problem of slavery, meanwhile, is parcelled out to a specific "tract of land," for whilst "there must be time for their manumission," this "cannot be done at once" – the process would thus occur gradually as America enveloped yet more space. In this sense, the anonymous author of *The Golden Age* construed space as a temporal category: the uchronic content was expressed topologically, as a space capable of absorbing the bundle of future problems that many Americans feared.[444]

Although overawed by the spatial extent of future America, Celadon is also forced to reflect upon its dizzying historical progress thus far: "How rapid must have been the growth of my native country!" he observes, when "in that short space of time" – "scarce three hundred years" – America had risen "to bid defiance to Great-Britain itself." Who was to say,

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[441] Benjamin Franklin to Joseph Banks (27 July, 1783), in Ellen R. Cohn, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (41 vols., New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 2011), XL, p.399: Franklin was discussing the "late astronomical Discoveries" of the Royal Society, adding that "the Progress of human Knowledge will be rapid, and Discoveries made of which we have at present no Conception." On contemporary wonder at scientific discoveries, see, *passim*, C. C. Gillespie, *The Montgolfier Brothers and the Invention of Aviation: 1783-1784* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1983); Michael R. Lynn, *Popular Science and Public Opinion in Eighteenth-Century France* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2006), pp.92-122.
[442] Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, p.47-48; Spahn, *Jefferson, Time and History*, pp.179-80.
[443] Sarah F. Wood, *Quixotic Fictions of the USA, 1792-1815* (Oxford, OUP, 2005), pp.42-43.
[444] "Celadon," *The Golden Age; or, Future Glory of North America Discovered by an Angel to Celadon in Several Entertaining Visions* (n.p., 1785), p.5, 6, 9, 10.

therefore, that America would not, unlike the nation from which it sprang, continue to accelerate towards a similar fate? Citing the long-established trope of British imperial and historical decline, whereby that "once flourishing kingdom, having reached the zenith of temporal grandeur" was now "lamentably degenerated," the angel warns Celadon that America can expect no such "exemption from the usual vicissitudes fortune." Yet in view of the natural beneficence of American space – plentiful, inexhaustible – "such a change is not likely to happen very soon." Unlike the republics of classical antiquity and the degenerative precedents they set, America would defer the temptations of corruption, indigence and luxury by constantly recharging its resources of virtue through the recourse to virgin pastoral land.[445] This was a vision of an American future mapped out across the expanse of American terrain.[446]

Thought experiments and comforting tales such as these were not merely the preserve of early republican prose poetry, nor were they confined to the imagination: in the early Republic, time travel – at least, into the past – seemed perfectly possible. During his exile in the United States between 1794 and 1796, Talleyrand undertook a tour of the nascent Republic. His journeys into the heart of the continent proved revelatory. Setting out west from the seaboard cities of New England, Talleyrand claimed to witness the "history" and "progress" of human life unfold – in reverse – before his eyes:

> It is a new spectacle for a traveller who, leaving one of the principal cities where society is perfected, to traverses successively all the stages of civilization and industry, which sink progressively lower and lower, until he arrives after a few days at the shapeless rude cabin constructed of newly felled logs. Such a trip is a sort of practical and living analysis of the origin of peoples and states: one departs from the most complex social organization to arrive amidst the elements of the most simple…

Whilst this beguiling process occurred in real-time, the historical distance Talleyrand traversed seemed immense, enhancing his sense of time travelled. "[E]ach day," he wrote:

> …one loses sight of some of those inventions which our needs, as they have multiplied, have made into necessities; it seems as though one were traveling backwards through the history of the progress of the human mind.

For Talleyrand, routes through the Mid-West seemed like time tunnels leading towards a distant, primordial past.[447] He also felt a palpable sense of dislocation since the "social links"

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[445] The essential text here is: Drew McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (Chapel Hill, NC., North Carolina Press, 1980), pp.185-208; see: Merrill D. Peterson, *Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (Oxford, OUP, 1986), pp.745-54; Eran Shalev, *Rome Reborn on Western Shores: Historical Imagination and the Creation of the American Republic* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2009), pp.73-113.

[446] "Celadon," *The Golden Age*, p.11, 7.

[447] Wayne Franklin, *Discoverers, Explorers, Settlers: The Diligent Writers of Early America* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1979), p.82; the classic texts on this subject remain: Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land:*

that connected "men who seem to belong so little to the same association," existed simultaneously within the same nation. As such, the incomprehensible vastness of the continent enabled him "to rediscover in the succession of space what seemed to only belong to the succession of time."[448]

The publication of *The Golden Age* in particular coincided with a period of flux and uncertainty in American political life. The repeated elision of American space and time in the political and literary discourse that followed the conclusion of the Revolutionary War sought to make the future implicit in the present.[449] It satisfied a desire to ameliorate a prevalent fear that the Revolution had rendered the future unforeseeable. It thus served to provide a reassuring glimpse of the inapprehensible – to "resolve certain doubts," to comfort those "anxious" about their "future condition." The re-spatialisation of the historical time of the Republic enabled contemporaries to plot out the future, to preview history as a fixed chain of evenly "spaced" events leading towards a preordained destination.[450] As such, the intervening "time" between present and future could be apprehended as unchanging and thus adequately planned for since the capacity of the future to introduce new and unforeseeable circumstances would be greatly, if not entirely diminished. Discourses on time travel during the early Republic consoled a nation unable to cope with the pace of change, offering Americans an imaginative means of retroactively repairing the revolutionary tear in historical time.[451] In France, literary experimentations with time travel provided the intellectual backdrop to one of the most momentous events of the Revolution.

The American West as Symbol and Myth (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1950), and Leo Marx, *The Machine in the Garden* (Oxford, OUP, 1964).

[448] Talleyrand-Périgord, Charles-Maurice, prince de Benevent, *Mémoire sur les relations commerciales des Etats-Unis avec l'Angleterre* (1799), (London, J. de Boffe, 1808), p.22-3: "C'est un spectacle neuf pour le voyageur qui, partant d'une ville principale où l'état social est perfectionné, traverse successivement tous les degrés de civilisation et d'industrie qui vont toujours en s'affoiblissant, jusqu'à ce qu'il arrive en très-peu de jours à la cabane informe et grossière construite de troncs d'arbres nouvellement abattus. Un tel voyage est un sorte d'analyse pratique et vivante de l'origine des peuples et des états : on part de l'ensemble le plus composé pour arriver aux élémens [sic] les plus simples ; à chaque journée on perd de vue quelques-unes de ces inventions que nos besoins, en se multipliant, ont rendues nécessaires ; et il semble que l'on voyage en arrière dans l'histoire des progrès de l'esprit humain"; "à retrouver dans la succession de l'espace ce qui semble n'appartenir qu'à la succession des temps…" On Talleyrand's voyages through America and his financial dealings, see: Hans Huth, Wilma J. Pugh, *Talleyrand in America as a Financial Promoter: Unpublished Letters and Memoirs* (Washington, DC., Government Printing Office, 1942); Roger G. Kennedy, *Orders from France: The Americans and the French in a Revolutionary World, 1780-1820* (New York, NY., Knopf, 1989); Michel Poniatowski, *Talleyrand aux États-Unis* (Parris, Perrin, 1976); John L. Earl, 'Talleyrand in Philadelphia,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 91 (July, 1967), pp.282-89.

[449] History was, in effect, to be de-temporalised; many observers believed that the American Republic, like the republics of classical history, was already on a path to collapse; Aedanus Burke, in his *Consideration on the Society or Order of Cincinnati* (Philadelphia, PA., Robert Bell, 1783), p.13, remarked that America, unlike those ancient republic who had experienced a cycle of "growth, perfection, and decay," had accelerated through "an untimely birth [and] suffered an abortion before it was in maturity fit to come into the world."

[450] On "spacetime" in the legal thought of Thomas Jefferson, see: Matthew Crow, 'Jefferson, Pocock, and the Temporality of Law in a Republic,' *Republics of Letters: A Journal for the Study of Knowledge, Politics and the Arts* 2 (1, December 2010): http://rofl.stanford.edu/node/79.

[451] A trend that would continue into the nineteenth century, as demonstrated by the publication of Washington Irving's *Rip Van Winkle* (1819): see, Lloyd Pratt, *Archives of American Time: Literature and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), pp.24-30.

III. Time Warps

"*All these terrible events will fall one over the other with the fatal gravity and rapidity of a stone which descends into the abyss. Barely an interval of four months separates each of these revolutions, which, in the ordinary course of things, would have made ages in the world. Each interval, here, is longer than a century.* […] *There are no more centuries, nor years, nor months, nor days, nor hours… Time no longer existed; time had perished. The Revolution…seemed to have begun by exterminating time.*"

Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* (1849)[452]

"*Hours – half hours – minutes, are of importance in examining such a crowd of events occurring within so short a limit both of time and space.*"

John Wilson Croker, *Essays on the Early Period of the Revolution* (1857)[453]

For both eighteenth century *philosophes* and nineteenth century *positivistes*, linear time suggested a continuous, non-retrogressive flow of historical progress; to the revolutionaries, by contrast, it represented an interminable sense of duration.[454] If, as Mona Ozouf observes, the revolutionaries were becoming aware of the notion of "time as duration [*durée*]," as an expanse that would inevitably prolong the revolutionary project of renewal, then the purpose of the *journée* was to circumvent time, by violent means if necessary.[455] As a consequence, the "spatial" categories of experience and expectation were both simultaneously effaced by this event, propelling the Revolution instantaneously through history by obliterating intervening time.[456]

The *journées* of the French Revolution were expressions of political impatience; they represent the concerted rejection of an alternative temporality.[457] This may be seen both in the

[452] Jules Michelet, *Histoire de la Révolution Française* (7 vols., Paris, Chamerot, 1849), IV, p.323: "Tous ces événements terribles vont tomber l'un sur l'autre avec la pesanteur et la rapidité fatal d'une pierre qui descend à l'abîme. A peine un intervalle de quatre mois sépare chacune de ces révolutions, qui, au cours ordinaire des choses, auraient fait des âges du monde. Chaque intervalle, ici, c'est plus d'un siècle. […] Il n'y avait plus ni siècle, ni année, ni mois, ni jour, ni heure… Le temps n'existait plus; le temps avait péri. La Révolution…semblait avoir commencé par exterminer le temps. Libre du temps, elle allait sans compter."
[453] John Wilson Croker, *Essays on the Early Period of the French Revolution* (London, J. Murray, 1857), p.206.
[454] On *positiviste* temporal thought, see: Perovic, 'Year I and Year 61,' in Lorenz, Bevernage, eds., *Breaking Up Time*, see: pp.100-106; John Heilbron, 'August Comte and Modern Epistemology,' *Sociological Theory* 8 (2, 1990), pp.153-62.
[455] Mona Ozouf, 'Revolutionary Calendar,' in François Furet, Mona Ozouf, eds., *A Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution* (trans., Arthur Goldhammer), (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1989), pp.538-47, here: p.540.
[456] On the Koselleckian formulation of "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" in everyday life, see: Michael Pickering, 'Experience as horizon: Koselleck, expectation, and historical time,' *Cultural Studies* 18 (2004), pp.271-89.
[457] Sophie Wahnich, *La Longue Patience du peuple: 1792. Naissance de la République* (Paris, Payot, 2008); my thinking has partly been influenced by studies on Russian revolutionary terrorism, see: Claudia Verhoeven, 'Time of Terror, Terror of Time. On the Impatience of Russian Revolutionary Terrorism (Early 1860s – Early 1880s), in *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 58 (2010), pp.254-273.

way the problem of duration was discussed and how the aftermath of the revolutionary *journée* was experienced.[458] More broadly, it points to how, during this transitional period, alternative visions of historical time were used to challenge the two temporal metaphors, the circle and the arrow, that have dominated historiographical discourses on revolution and modernity. For the revolutionaries, the shape of history was malleable. The *journées* of the French Revolution – in particular 10 August 1792, the day the Parisian sansculottes besieged the Tuileries Palace, forcing the suspension and eventual abolition of the monarchy – were characterised by a form of collective political participation that displayed a capacity for time-warp thinking.[459] What was realised on 10 August was a new way of conceiving of revolutionary action that, through immense demonstrations of popular violence, could circumvent the ordinary gradations of historical time, warping its linearity, and piercing a time-tunnel through duration towards a radiant future.[460]

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Between the passage of the Le Chapelier law in June 1791 – which repressed the political rights of collective bodies such as the sections and guilds, and firmly resituated the Assembly as the exclusive arbiter of the national will – and the collapse of the monarchy in August 1792, a series of events convinced many observers that the progress of the Revolution was in peril.[461] Following the flight of the king to Varennes and the subsequent massacre of anti-royalist petitioners on the Champ de Mars, Isaac René le Chapelier appeared before the Assembly to call upon the deputies to double-down upon the external expression of political

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[458] Lynn Hunt, 'The World We Have Gained: The Future of the French Revolution,' *The American Historical Review* 108 (1, February 2003), pp.1-19, see p.8: "The *journée* captured many of ambiguities of temporal experience during the revolution. It marked a day that felt endlessly long when lived through, a day whose events effected major personal and political transformations, that is, rupture with the past. And yet each *journée* only set off a further cascade of events and thereby increased the desire to get the future under control."

[459] The events of 10 August, 1792, are outlined in detail in, Philippe Sagnac, *La Révolution du 10 août 1792: La chute de la royauté* (Paris, Librairie Hachette, 1909); on the storming of the Tuileries palace: Paul de Vallière, *Le 10 août 1792: grandeur helvetique: la défence des Tuileries et la destruction du regiment des gardes-suisses de France à Paris* (Lausanne, Éditions L'Age d'Homme, 1992); the day is chronicled in minute detail by Pierre-Louis Roederer, *Chronique de Cinquante Jours du 20 juin au 10 août 1792* (Paris, Lachevardiere, 1832), pp.353-74.

[460] This posited the possibility of rupturing Newtonian temporality, which assumed a distinction between "absolute" time – "which in itself and from its own nature flows equally without relation to anything external" – and "popular" time – which was inconstant, subject to perceived alterations and dictated by the experience of historical events: see, J. Alexander Gunn, *The Problem of Time: An Historical and Critical Study* (London, George Allen & Unwin, 1929), pp.57-63, and Spahn, *Jefferson, Time and History*, pp.18-20; the purpose of the violence of the *journée* was to place French society beyond time itself, where newly won liberty might not suffer the accretions of age.

[461] On the Le Chapelier law, see: William H. Sewell, Jr., *Work and Revolution in France: The Language of Labor from the Old Regime to 1848* (Cambridge, CUP, 1980), pp.86-91; Armand Colin, 'La Loi le Chapelier,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 46 (July-August 1931), pp.287-314; Michael Sonenscher, 'Journeymen, the Courts and the French Trades, 1781-1791,' *Past & Present* 114 (February 1987), pp.77-109; on the sans-culottes response to reforms of democracy, including the Le Chapelier law, see: Michael Sonenscher, *Sans-Culottes: An Eighteenth-Century Emblem in the French Revolution* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2008), p.283-361.

will emanating from the sections – in effect, to finalise the Revolution.[462] "When a nation changes the form of its government, every citizen is a public official," he declared, "everyone deliberates and should deliberate on matters of public import." The speedier this could be achieved the better: "everything that hastens, everything that ensures, everything that accelerates a revolution should be put into use." Revolution, however, was "a momentary unrest" that enrolled popular participation so that it "might encounter fewer obstacles and might reach its goal more promptly." "When a revolution is finished," however, "when the constitution of the empire is fixed," then it was "necessary for the safety of this constitution that everything return to the most perfect order, that nothing hinder the action of the constituted powers, that deliberation and power exist nowhere but only where the constitution has placed them."[463]

As Le Chapelier resumed his seat, Robespierre arose, turning towards the gallery, and addressing the people directly: "*They* say we no longer have any need for these clubs, because the Revolution is finished."[464] Yet "when I see on the one hand that the nascent Constitution still has its internal and external enemies;" when "I see intrigue, falsity, simultaneously raise alarm, sow strife and discord; when I see the leaders of opposing factions fight less for the cause of the Revolution than to grasp the power dominated under the name of the monarch; when I see the exaggerated zeal with which they prescribe blind obedience, but proscribe the word liberty…I do not believe that the Revolution is over!"[465] Whilst the deputies of the National Assembly may have disagreed on the detail of the constitution, very few disagreed that the constitution itself would be the end-point of the Revolution.[466] What Robespierre had

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[462] The most apposite study of the king's attempted escape to Varennes is, Ozouf, 'La Révolution française et l'aléatoire: l'exemple de Varennes,' in *L'homme régénéré*, pp.67-92; David Andress, *Massacre at the Champ de Mars: Popular Dissent and Political Culture in the French Revolution* (Woodbridge, Boydell Press, 2000), pp.174-90.

[463] *AP*, XXXI, p.617: "Quand une nation change la forme de son gouvernement, chaque citoyen est magistrat; tous délibèrent et doivent délibérer sur la chose publique; et tout ce qui presse, tout ce qui assure, tout ce qui accélère une Révolution doit être mis en usage. C'est une fermentation momentanée qu'il faut soutenir et même accroître, pour que la Révolutionne laissant plus aucun doute à ceux qui s'y opposent, elle éprouve moins d'obstacles et parvienne plus promptement à sa fin. Mais, lorsque, la Révolution est terminée, lorsque la Constitution de l'Empire est fixée, lorsqu'elle a délégué tous les pouvoirs publics, appelé toutes les autorités, alors il faut, pour le salut de cette Constitution, que tout rentre dans l'ordre le plus parfait, que rien n'entrave l'action des pouvoirs constitués, que la délibération et la puissance ne soient plus que là où la Constitution les a placées, et que chacun respecte assez et ses droits de citoyen et les fonctions déléguées, pour ne pas excéder les uns, et n'attenter jamais aux autres."

[464] On crowd participation in the revolutionary assemblies, see: Paul Friedland, *Political Actors: Representative Bodies and Theatricality in the Age of the French Revolution* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2002), pp.258-94; on revolutionary street culture, see: Laura Mason, *Singing the French Revolution: Popular Culture and Politics, 1787-1799* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 1995), pp.104-29.

[465] *AP*, XXXI, p.620: "Pour moi, quand je vois d'un côté que la Constitution naissante a encore des ennemis intérieurs et extérieurs; quand je vois que les discours et les signes extérieurs sont changés, mais que les actions sont toujours les mêmes […]; quand je vois l'intrigue, la fausseté, donner en même temps l'alarme, semer les troubles et la discorde; lorsque je vois les chefs des factions opposées, combattre moins pour la cause de la Révolution que pour envahir le pouvoir de dominer sous le nom du monarque; lorsque d'un autre côté je vois le zèle exagéré avec lequel ils prescrivent l'obéissance aveugle, en même temps qu'ils proscrivent jusqu'au mot de liberté; […] je ne crois pas que la Révolution soit finie!"

[466] Dan Edelstein, 'From Constitutional to Permanent Revolution: 1649 and 1793,' in Baker and Edelstein, *Scripting Revolution*, pp.118-30, here: p.126; p.119: when mere constitutional renovation seemed insufficient, the

instead suggested was that the mere constitutional renovation of France was an insufficiently 'revolutionary' conclusion. His remark "that the exterior discussions and signs are changed, but that the actions remain the same," prefigured the impossible civic demands that would later be made of French citizens under the Jacobin Republic – the great (and unending) task of unmasking false patriots.

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In April 1792, France declared war on Austria and suffered immediate humiliation at Longwy and Verdun. The pressure upon the Legislative Assembly to cleanse the state of its internal enemies escalated. Fraudulent citizens and fanatical priests, declared Vergniaud, were busy assisting the return of émigrés and counterrevolutionaries, these "audacious satellites of despotism" who carried "fifteen centuries of pride and barbarism in their feudal souls."[467] One consequence of the flight to Varennes, of course, was the royal promulgation of the constitution, without which Louis could not possibly have reclaimed his throne, but that made it possible to believe that the Revolution had been concluded.[468] By early 1792, however, the king was resolutely refusing to display his support for the constitution. As the invective levelled against the intransigent monarch grew and the deadlock between executive and legislative powers intensified, a fear emerged amidst the Parisian sections and radical deputies that the Revolution – far from having reached completion, as Le Chapelier had suggested – was in fact coming to a halt.

On 20 June, an irate crowd of sans-culottes swarmed the Tuileries. Encouraged by the radical sections of Paris to overturn the royal veto – in particular, upon the decrees outlawing non-juring priests – and to see the demand the recall of the recently dismissed Girondin ministry, the demonstrators pinned the king up against a window seat and harangued him for three hours.[469] Over the ensuing forty days, the Revolution seemed to become an uncontrollable force, possessed of its own velocity and volition. "Things were going faster and farther than the Girondins wished," observed Pierre-Louis Roederer, the *procurer-*

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revolutionaries established an "elusive goal" that "always lay slightly out of reach," thereby seeming to render the Revolution "permanent." On new forms of rhetoric and the new political class created by the Revolution, see: Lynn Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in the French Revolution* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1984), pp.19-51, 149-79.

[467] Schama, *Citizens*, p.504.

[468] Denis Richet, 'Revolutionary *Journées*,' in Furet and Ozouf, eds., *Critical Dictionary*, pp.124-36, see: p.128; Timothy Tackett, 'The Flight to Varennes and the Coming of the Terror,' *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 29 (3, Fall 2003), pp.469-93.

[469] On the political controversies surrounding non-juring, or refractory priests during the Revolution: Malcolm Crook, 'Citizen Bishops: Episcopal Elections in the French Revolution' *Historical Journal* 43 (4, December 2000), pp.955-76; Steven Englund, 'Church and State in France since the Revolution,' *Journal of Church and State* 34 (2, Spring 1992), pp.325-61; Serge Bianchi, 'Les curés rouges dans la Révolution française,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 54 (249, July-September 1982), pp.364-92.

général-syndic of Paris: "they were terrified at the rapidity of the popular movement." By saluting the efforts of the demonstrators, by hailing their impatience, Vergniaud and Roland had hoped to weaken the intransigence of their monarch, and solidify their own political position, without affecting any substantive change to the constitutionality of the veto. By "at once protecting and menacing" the crown, recalled Roederer, by forcing it between "the alternative of being crushed by the Jacobins, or of throwing itself into [their] hands," the Girondins appealed both rhetorically and strategically to a modality of historical time that seemed to delegitimise the actions of the monarchy. Their policy now was "to temporise – to gain time – to work upon the fears of the Court and on its gratitude."[470]

The sans-culottes were less inclined to wait. Horrified by the prospect of prolonging the present, which they polemically characterised as "oppressive" both in terms of its obstruction of liberty and its interminable duration, the sections wished to see the present yield to the future – in effect, to see the present become past. Yet as the impatience of the sections grew, so too did the time gulf separating them from their goal. On 3 July, Vergniaud had called upon the Assembly to act immediately:

> Our fortunes, our lives, our liberty are menaced, anarchy approaches with all the scourges that disrupt political bodies; despotism alone raises its long-since humiliated head, rejoices at our miseries, and awaiting to devour its prey. Appeal, it is time: appeal to all France to save the *patrie*; show them the gulf in all its immensity. It is only by an extraordinary effort that they may cross it…[471]

The empty homogeneity of the temporal abyss that separated the present from the future presented a daunting prospect. But whilst Vergniaud acknowledged the "gulf" in all its menace, he nevertheless believed it to be surmountable. By calling for popular action, for a general movement throughout "all France," he declared that the "time" had now arrived for an "extraordinary" human "effort" to traverse it. The pathway of historical progress was not predetermined and its pace was not pre-set; the speed of historical time could be modulated by sheer force of human will. During the winter of 1793, Camille Desmoulins would upbraid those "false patriots" who winced at such expressions of revolutionary impatience. "We well know that the present state is not that of liberty; but, patience, you will be free one day," he

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[470] Roederer, *Chronique de Cinquante Jours*, p.299: "Les choses marchaient plus vite et allaient plus loin que ne voulaient les députés de la Gironde. Ils étaient effrayés de la rapidité du mouvement populaire. […] Temporiser, gagner du temps, espérer quelque chose de la détresse de la cour, et de sa gratitude en la soutenant et en la menaçant tout à la fois, la serrer dans l'alternative de succomber sous les coups des jacobins fougueux…"

[471] Pierre Vergniaud, *Opinion de M. Vergniaud, député du département de la Gironde sur la situation actuelle de la France, prononcé le 3 juillet 1792… Imprimée et envoyée aux 83 départemens par ordre de l'Assemblée nationale* (Paris, 1792), p.22: "Nos fortunes, nos vies, la liberté sont menacées, l'anarchie s'approche avec tous les fléaux qui désorganisent les corps politiques ; le despotisme seul soulevant sa tête longtemps humiliée, jouit de nos misères, et attend sa proie pour la dévorer. Appelez, il en est temps ; appelez tous les Français pour sauver la patrie ; montrez-leur le gouffre dans toute son immensité. Ce n'est que par un effort extraordinaire qu'ils pourront le franchir…"

scoffed: "Those apparently thinking that liberty, like infancy, needs to pass through screams and tears in order to arrive at the age of maturity" had sorely misunderstood the operation of popular sovereignty. The people "are free at the moment they desire to be so," Desmoulins insisted, recalling the sudden "return to the fullness of their rights from the 14 July." Liberty "possessed neither a decrepitude nor an infancy; it has only one age, that of force and vigour."[472] It was, in this sense, timeless; the actualisation of liberty did not imply a need to wait.

Popular patience quickly ebbed. On 15 July, Jacques Nicolas Billaud-Varenne, appeared before the Jacobin Club to declare that if action was not immediately taken, then the "gulf" adumbrated by Vergniaud would become insurmountable and a stationary people would witness the past re-engulf the present. Invoking the spectre of cyclicality, Billaud-Varenne asked whether the French people had "undertaken a revolution in order to conquer liberty, or only to pass from despotism to anarchy, and to fall from anarchy back into a new slavery?" "Have the people overturned the towers of the Bastille in order to partake in the benefits of their victory, or to consent to remain *eternally* in the misery of their abasement?" As the completion of the Revolution slipped ever further into the future, it seemed probable that the present would be confined to such a gradual process of amelioration that it would resemble an endless historical reiteration. If nothing were done to overcome the growing gulf, warned the radical sans-culottes leader, Pierre-Gaspard Chaumette, "the ancien regime would be resuscitated," and France would once again suffer beneath the oppression of "the *dime*, the *gabelle*, the *aides*, the feudal rights, [and] the *mainmorte*." It was therefore possible to rationalise "the *slow* notification of useful decrees," and the "counterrevolutionary *vetos*" issued by a king "impregnated with inherited prejudices," as a manifestation of treachery, as a bid to place the Revolution in reverse.[473] By seeming to frustrate the innate tempo of revolution historical progress, the monarchy had essentially declared itself illegitimate.

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[472] Camille Desmoulins, '4.Vive Libre ou Mourir!' (30 frimaire, l'an II) (20 December, 1793), in Pierre Pachet, ed., *Le Vieux Cordelier* (Paris, Belin, 1987), pp.61-68, here: p.61; on Desmoulin's rhetoric of conspiracy, see: Caroline Weber, 'The Bridle and the Spur: Collusion and Contestation in Desmoulins' *Vieux Cordelier*,' in *Terror and its Discontents: Suspect Words in Revolutionary France* (Minneapolis, MN., University of Minnesota Press, 2003), pp.115-70.

[473] Jacques Nicolas Billaud-Varenne, *Discours de M. Billaud-Varenne, sur les mesures à prendre pour sauver la patrie, prononcé à la séance du 15 juillet 1792…* (Paris, 1792), pp.1: "Avons-nous entrepris une révolution pour conquérir la liberté, ou seulement pour passer du despotisme à l'anarchie, et tomber de l'anarchie dans un nouvel esclavage? Le peuple a-t-il renversé les tours de la Bastille pour partager les avantages de sa victoire, ou pour consentir à rester éternellement dans la misère et dans l'avilissement," p.2: "c'est que le roi, plus puissant que jamais, écrase déjà, du poids de son autorité, le pouvoir législatif, perpétuellement entravé, ou par la lenteur de la notification des décrets utiles, ou par la célérité de la transmission des lois corrosives, ou par des *vetos* contre-révolutionnaires…c'est que le roi, imprégné des préjugés inhérens [sic] à cette dignité suprême, ne sait appeler aux places les plus importantes que les roués de son ancienne cour…" See also: Pierre-Gaspard Chaumette, *Mémoires de Chaumette sur la Révolution du 10 août 1792* (Paris, Société de l'histoire de la Révolution, 1893), p.26: "Alors l'ancien régime serait ressuscité, la dime, la gabelle, les aides, les droits féodaux, la mainmorte auraient écrasé ceux qui auraient survécu au bouleversement général."

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In July, the patience of the people began to crack. Troops of petitioners now began interrupting Assembly proceedings on an hourly basis. They were unanimous in their desire to see the suspension of the monarchy; they were uniform in their belief that the time available to save the Revolution was running out. On 23 July, a *fédérés* delegation entered the legislative chamber to denounce the continued "dissimulations" of the Assembly: "Legislators, the peril is imminent; the reign of truth must commence." Calling upon the deputies to "suspend the executive power," the delegation insisted that there was "not a second to lose." Seven days later, the citizens of Beaucaire made their own unannounced appearance: "Legislators, the present time is pregnant with the future! Do not disdain to save us, there is still time; but soon you will have no more." The justification for these interventions – and for the bold demand to suspend the monarchy – were articulated in temporal terms, legitimated by the notion that popular patience had elapsed. Later, on 6 August, the *fédérés* would return to the tribune of the Assembly to announce that the nation was entirely exhausted:

> For three years we have been in revolution, how many conspirators, how many cowards, how many traitors, perjurers, prevaricators have you observed; and still the blade of national vengeance remains suspended! *The people grow weary*; they recognise the guilty; they are outraged!

The "blade of national vengeance," suspended precariously above the heads of the culpable, may be read here as a reference to the velocity of the Revolution itself, which also seemed to have jammed.[474]

During the preceding months, the Assembly had been recast as a body of time-wasters. In its efforts to bend to royal whim, Chaumette portrayed the legislature as "consuming precious time in order to regulate the ceremonial and etiquette between it and the king," often passing "entire sittings deciding if deputations to the king would be composed of twenty, thirty or sixty members." "It was this Assembly which, instead of taking vigorous measures against the enemies of liberty, fatuously passed its time hearing declamatory reports, all of which ended with…*messages to the king* – for shame!"[475] The Assembly

[474] Wahnich, *La Longue Patience,* p.383: "Législateurs, le péril est imminent; il faut que le règne de la vérité commence. […] Faites nommer une Convention nationale…Il n'y a pas un instant à perdre," p.392: "Législateurs, le temps présent est gros de l'avenir. Ne dédaignez pas de nous sauver, il en est temps encore; bientôt vous ne le pourrez pas," p.400: "Il y a trois ans que nous sommes en révolution, combien avons-nous vu de conspirateurs, combien de lâches, combien de traîtres, de parjures, de prévaricateurs; et le glaive des vengeances nationales est encore suspendu! Le peuple se lasse; il connaît les coupables; il est indigné!" Emphasis added.

[475] Chaumette, *Mémoires de Chaumette*, p.6, footnote.3: "Ce fut cette Assemblée qui consume un temps précieux pour régler le cérémonial et l'étiquette entre elle et le roi, qui passa des séances entières pour décider si les députations au roi seraient composées de vingt, de trente ou de soixante membres…Ce fut cette Assemblée qui, au

appeared to waste yet more time as it began deliberating the fate of Lafayette, who, during a protracted trial, was accused of having violated the constitution on 28 June when he threatened to "clear the chamber of factions" and lift the political malaise.[476] The invective surrounding the veto, meanwhile, was exacerbated by the belief that the king was intriguing with counterrevolutionaries.[477] In a fiery petition of 29 July, the citizens of Rouen declared that France "had wanted a Constitution which would fix the duties and rights of the people and monarch: it was necessary to eradicate prejudices, destroy habits, annihilate abuses." A "renovation was necessary," but this was now being placed in peril, if not reverse, by the temporising application of the royal veto.[478] Outright refusals in June to sanction legislative decrees strengthening penalties against émigrés and recalcitrant clergymen further implicated Louis in the rumour mill of counterrevolutionary intrigue. "[M]uch more delay," Roland warned, "and a grieving people will see in its king the friend and accomplice of conspirators."[479]

For many of the radical Parisian sections, the application of the suspensive veto had become synonymous with counterrevolutionary conspiracy: executive authority was being used in order to *delay* the "renovation" of France. Many of the petitioners portrayed the temporary obstruction of vital patriotic measures – such as the recruitment of *fédéré* soldiers to defend Paris against invasion – as an attempt to allow enough time for the external enemies of France to overrun the Revolution. As Claudia Verhoeven has observed, political impatience of this sort is more than a merely "essentialized psychological category." It must instead be understood as "a physical category grounded in unique historical conditions" – as a yearning, almost aching experience, akin to hunger, and constitutive of anger and anxiety.[480] Within the context of the summer of 1792, impatience with ordinary political progress was itself founded upon the historical hyperconsciousness engendered by events.[481] Faced with the "ever memorable vengeance" promised by the Duke of Brunswick should people dare to harm their monarch, Parisians could justifiably comprehend their impatience as historically consequential.[482]

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lieu de prendre des mesures de vigueur contre les ennemis de la liberté, passa niaisement son temps à entendre des rapports déclamatoires qui tous se terminaient par…*des messages au roi* – O honte!"

[476] The accusations are detailed in an American publication, *Impeachment of Mr. La Fayette: containing his accusation (stated in the report of the Extraordinary Commission to the National Assembly, on the 8th of August, 1792), supported by Mr. Brissot of Warville; and his defence by Mr. Vaublanc* (Philadelphia, PA., printed by John Parker, 1793); see also: C. J. Mitchell, *The French Legislative Assembly of 1791* (Leiden, Brill, 1988), pp.91-102.

[477] Munro Price, 'Louis XVI and Gustavus III: Secret Diplomacy and Counter-Revolution, 1791-1792,' *Historical Journal* 42 (2, June 1999), pp.435-66.

[478] *AP*, XLV, p.681: "Nous avons voulu une Constitution qui fixât les devoirs et les droits du peuple et du monarque: il fallait alors déraciner des préjugés, détruire des habitudes, anéantir des abus. Une rénovation était nécessaire, et les Français l'ont faite."

[479] William Doyle, *The Oxford History of the French Revolution* (Oxford, OUP, 1986), p.185.

[480] Verhoeven, 'Time of Terror, Terror of Time,' p.255.

[481] On theories of historical hyperconsciousness, see: Martin L. Davies, *Imprisoned by History: Aspects of Historicized Life* (New York, NY., Routledge, 2010), p.82.

[482] On the 'Brunswick Manifesto,' see: Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution*, I, p.37.

With the political present becoming unendurable, the time that remained until the advent of the idealised future seemed to augment. On 4 August, the section des Gravilliers descended upon the Assembly and presented a petition beseeching the deputies to suspend the monarchy – the source, as they saw it, of historical stasis and revolutionary unfulfillment. Their tribune was Léonard Bourdon, who declared that if action were not immediately taken, and the impatience of the people not instantly satisfied, then the Revolution would be subsumed, perhaps irrevocably, by this ever-widening time gulf:

> Legislators, circumstances are pressing; the executive power knows the wish of the nation. If it conspires against a nation that is too generous and too patient, what will be the limit of its conspiracies? War is declared between Louis XVI and France; every day, every hour, every minute are becoming centuries, becoming eternity; one instant lost, [and] France may be lost.[483]

The section des Gravilliers had evoked a common sense that the 'now' of the Revolution, a space of action saturated with limitless possibility, was about to become a part of the ever-accumulating 'history' of the Revolution; that it too was about to pass into the past, and that France would be condemned to suffer the protracted political ameliorations offered by the ordinary pace of historical progress. The real-time realisation of the Revolution would become forever too late. On 9 August, the Assembly "completed the general discontent of the people," observed the Englishman, Richard Twiss, "by appearing to protract the question relative to the king's *decheance* at a time when there was not a moment to lose." The sections determined to finally force the hand of history. From then on, Twiss wrote, "the fermentation increased every minute, in a very alarming manner."[484]

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On 10 August 1792, fourteen centuries of French monarchy fell in fewer than two hours.[485] At midnight the tocsin of the Faubourg St. Antoine rang out, calling upon the sectional clubs to take to the streets. The pressure of popular impatience was at last unleashed. "The *officiers municipaux* that I had sent into the different sections brought me word of the impatience of the people," recalled the *mairie*, Jérôme Pétion: "I saw the necessity, and foresaw the success, of the insurrection." There was now nothing more to be done: "the attack could be no longer

[483] *AP*, XLVII, p.474: "Législateurs, les circonstances sont impérieuses; le pouvoir exécutif connaît le vœu de la nation. S'il conspire contre une nation trop généreuse et trop patiente, quelle sera la mesure de ses conspirations? La guerre est déclarée entre Louis XVI et la France; chaque jour, chaque heure, chaque minute deviennent des siècles, deviennent l'énernité [sic]; un instant perdu, la France peut être perdue."
[484] Richard Twiss, *A Trip to Paris in July and August, 1792* (London, Minerva Press, 1793), p.71.
[485] Michel Vovelle, *The Fall of the French Monarchy, 1787-1792* (trans. Susan Burke), (Cambridge, CUP, 1972), pp.223-32; Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas*, pp.246-77.

deferred."[486] By mid-morning more than 20,000 armed protestors and National Guardsmen had gathered at the square outside the Tuileries Palace. From his besieged vantage point, Roederer observed the last remaining units of power drain from the monarchy. "I saw an insurrection that with every minute rendered itself more general, and consequently more legitimate." The legitimacy of the insurrection, it seemed, had become coefficient to its velocity. Asked whether martial law ought to be declared, Roederer simply shrugged: "this is a revolt, which is stronger than martial law, or than the power which should proclaim it."[487] As the royal family crossed the courtyard of the Tuileries, the silence that had momentarily descended upon the crowd was itself interrupted by the telling cry: "No more veto!"[488] The veto, the royal instrument that, since 1789, was popular portrayed as a political time-block on the Revolution was, till the last, central to the collective temporal consciousness of the people. This "changes all the ideas, all the opinions of patriots," remarked Nicolas Ruault: "A new career offers itself before them. The canon has overturned the constitutional throne and the constitution itself."[489]

With the king and his family despatched to the *loge* of the Assembly, the frenzied crowd descended upon the former royal residence. In *L'An 2440*, the time traveller had awoken to "broad and beautiful streets," "spacious intersections where such perfect order reigned."[490] On 11 August, Paris rose to a scene of unspeakable horror.[491] "The victims of the people's fury climb to eleven hundred," wrote the medical student Edmond Géraud in his diary. "One cannot take a step without stumbling over a head, a corpse, some limbs that are still palpitating; the streets are strewn with this hideous debris."[492] In the course of two hours, more than one thousand people were killed, six hundred of them Swiss Guards [Fig. 7]. According to the recollections of Chaumette, the Tuileries Palace, the primary site of the

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[486] Jérôme Pétion, *Observations de Jérôme Pétion, sur la lettre de Maximilien Robespierre* (Paris, 1792), p.13: "Toutes les circonstances se réunissaient, pour indiquer que le grand jour serait le 10. Les officiers municipaux, que j'avais priés de se rendre dans les sections, m'annoncèrent que l'impatience du peuple était extrême et qu'il n'attendrait pas plus longtemps."

[487] Roederer, *Chronique de Cinquante Jours*, p.449: "[J]e voyais une insurrection que chaque minute rendait plus générale, et par conséquent plus légitime," p.356: "il y a révolte plus forte que l'autorité de la loi martiale, et que ceux qui pourraient la proclamer." As Keith Michael Baker observes: "The revolutionary reassertion of national sovereignty on 10 August 1792 reopened the conceptual space between revolution and constitution, a space which the Constituent Assembly had been so anxious to seal, when, in concluding its deliberations less than a year earlier, it declared both the Revolution and the constitution complete. Within this space, the Terror would find its form, to be followed by the vicissitudes of the many efforts to bring the Revolution once again to its constitutional completion": *Inventing the French Revolution*, p.304.

[488] Schama, *Citizens*, p.521.

[489] Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien*, p.303: "La journée du 10 change toutes les idées, toutes les opinions des patriotes. Une nouvelle carrière s'offre devant eux…Le canon a renversé le trône constitutionnel et la constitution elle-même."

[490] Mercier, *L'An 2440*, p.36: "Je me perdais dans de grandes et belles rues proprement alignées. J'entrais dans des carrefours spacieux où régnait un si bon ordre que je n'y apercevais pas le plus léger embarras."

[491] On the violence at the Tuileries, see: Wolfgang Friedrich von Mülinen, *Das französische Schweizer-Garderegiment am 10. August 1792* (Luzern, Druck und Verlag, 1892), p.206.

[492] Edmond Géraud, *Journal d'un étudiant pendant la révolution, 1789-1793* (Paris, Plon-Nourrit, 1910), p.276: "Les victimes de la fureur du peuple se montent, dit-on, à onze cents. L'on ne peut faire un pas sans rencontrer une tête, un cadavre, des membres encore palpitants ; la voie publique est jonchée de ces hideux débris."

struggle, was "littered with corpses." It resembled "a vast slaughter house of sliced and palpitating chunks of limbs," of "the fuming entrails of horses," all "scattered amidst a sea of human blood."[493]

Within the context of revolutionary progress, of course, this carnage was both inevitable and necessary. "The brusque passage from the old state to the state of liberty," Adrien Duport later remarked, "was necessarily accompanied by violent convulsions."[494] Violence was justifiable – it was legitimate. The events of 20 June had demonstrated that forceful yet peaceful protest was ineffective. The intensity and duration of that violence, meanwhile, was essential if France was to break through the historical speed barrier. There was simply no more time for the gradualist prognostications of the pre-revolutionary *philosophes*. In order to efface the vast, empty expanse of time which confronted the nation, and through which generations of the oppressed might otherwise have to travel, this violence needed to acquire time-bending qualities. The more compressed the initial impact, the more instantaneous and extensive the subsequent progression. Violence on this scale could

Fig. 7. 'La Conquète de l'egalité: ou les trames déjouées, allégorie de la journée du 10 août 1792, dédié aux républicains français' (1792) http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40248094r

therefore fold or pleat the timeline of history, bringing about the temporal imbrication of present and future, and thereby effacing the intervening time – or duration. Vast historical

[493] Chaumette, *Mémoires de Chaumette*, p.60: "Le carnage est horrible. Toutes les cours sont jonchées de cadavres, le vestibule, l'escalier, la chapelle, tous les appartements ne présentèrent bientôt qu'une vaste boucherie de tronçons de membres coupés et palpitants, d'entrailles fumantes, de cheveux, d'armes brisées, de meubles, de glaces, de tapisseries en pièces et répandues dans des mares de sang humain." On the desecrated interiors of the Tuileries, see: Bernard Jacqué, Kristel Smentek, 'Wallpaper in the Royal Apartments at the Tuileries, 1789-1792,' *Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture* 13 (1, Winter 2005), pp.2-31; John Hardman, *The Life of Louis XVI* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 2016), pp.406-26.
[494] Miller, *A Natural History of Revolution*, p.53.

transformations could thus be experienced instantly. When Géraud warily wandered the streets of Paris on 12 August, for example, he found the city almost entirely unrecognisable. "Here we are, without suspecting it and without anyone being aware of it, under a republican government." France had hurtled through historical time, seemingly relieved of the historical weight anchoring it in situ. It would take some time for human consciousness to catch up with the speed of change. "A few more moments," Géraud observed, "and the sincere friends of freedom will soon sense the difference that exists between such an order of things and an hereditary monarchy under a counterrevolutionary king."[495]

Insurrectionary violence was also temporal violence; it ruptured the perception of linear historical time and provided a short-cut towards the future, circumventing the "gulf" that separated it from the present. France consequently bypassed the gradations of temporal experience by warping the horizon of historical expectation. On the third anniversary of the *journée*, Joseph Vincent Dumolard, the president of the Council of Five Hundred, depicted the violence of 10 August as historically catalytic. The insurrection "blew to smithereens an antique throne and the feeble constitution which underpinned it," and "preceded, so to speak, this long sequence of memorable events which seem to have squeezed ages into the narrow framework of a few years." "[T]he cannon fire of 10 August" – in effect, the violence of just a few hours – would "resound throughout the centuries," the hollowed out expanse of time, condensed into a single day, through which France had traversed. All this had "opened to France new destinies."[496] Violence thus imparted such an immense historical force that it enabled the insurrectionary crowd to momentarily levitate the weighty historicity of France. "Royalty is no more," crowed the *enragé* journalist, Étienne Psaume: "only a few minutes were needed to destroy this idol that our ignorance and stupidity had praised for fourteen centuries."[497] With the baggage of the past forcibly lifted, the French were transported through history at a vastly accelerated rate. "The *journée* of 10 August," wrote a jubilant Géraud, "advances us ten years down the bright road to freedom and public prosperity."[498]

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[495] Géraud, *Journal*, p.276: "Nous voilà, sans nous en douter et sans que personne y fasse attention, sous un gouvernement républicain. Encore quelques instants et les sincères amis de la liberté ne tarderont pas à sentir la salutaire différence qui règne entre un tel ordre de choses et une monarchie héréditaire, avec un roi contre-révolutionnaire."

[496] Joseph Vincent Dumolard, 'Anniversaire du 10 août: Discours prononcé par Dumolard, president du Conseil des Cinq Cents, le 23 thermidor, an 5 de la République,' in Guillaume Lallement, ed., *Choix de Rapports, Opinions, et Discours, prononcés à la Tribune Nationale depuis 1789 jusqu'à ce jour: Année 1795-1799. Le Directoire et les Conseils*, (20 vols., Paris, A. Eymery, 1821), XVI, pp.13-14, here: p.13: "Représentants du peuple, le canon du 10 août retentira dans les siècles: il mit en poudre un trône antique et la faible Constitution dont on l'avait étayé ; il ouvrit à la France des destinées nouvelles ; il préluda pour ainsi dire à cette longue suite d'événemens [sic] mémorables qui semblent avoir pressé les âges dans le cadre étroit de quelques années."

[497] Étienne Psaume, *Réponse aux objections des Monarchistes contre le possibilité d'une République en France* (Paris, J. J. Rainville, 1792), p.3.

[498] Géraud, *Journal*, p.282:"La journée du 10 août nous avance de dix ans dans les routes brillantes de la liberté et de la prospérité publique."

France had passed through a decade of history in a single day.

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The pressure of popular impatience that built over the summer of 1792 warped the linear shape of history, until its violent force seemed to spear a tunnel through time, opening the possibility for France to travel immense historical distances almost instantaneously. One such witness to this process was Rosalie Jullien, the bourgeois revolutionary, who observed proceedings from the window of her Saint-Germain apartment.[499]

On 10 August, in a bid to keep pace with the accumulation of events, Jullien hastily penned a series of hour-by-hour letters and diary entries.[500] Fearful that to await the end of the day would be to risk overlooking – or even forgetting – important episodes, themselves epocha in history, her letters consistently allude to the speed of historical change. "The circumstances in which we find ourselves," and which easily formed "the most violent crisis of the Revolution," were of such magnitude and consequence that they amounted to "the most astonishing and terrible tremor" to have struck "the monarchy in the fourteen centuries of its existence."[501] Although she claimed to have spied a "storm growing" since June, even Jullien found her predictive faculties confounded. On 8 August, she had reflected that the "importance" of Lafayette's trial necessitated a deliberative "slowness," and still foresaw "a fortnight before the terrible blow which will decide the fate of the empire, at least for some time." On 10 August, the rate at which France appeared to be travelling through historical time was incomprehensible: the insurrection "holds us for twenty-four hours in a kind of frenzy."[502]

Yet when "the deadly struggle" was over, Jullien observed, "safety, no, serenity, was restored." It was almost as though she had emerged – disorientated but intact – at the other end of the time tunnel opened by the awesome, violent force of the *journée*. The "frenzied" collision of opposing forces had given way to the most perfect calm. Four days later, Jullien

[499] Lindsay A.H. Parker, 'Family and Feminism in the French Revolution: The Case of Rosalie Ducrollay Jullien,' *Journal of Women's History* 24 (3, Fall 2012), pp.40-61.
[500] In fact, this is how many contemporary witnesses would record their experiences of the *journée*, in historically condensed micro-moments, hour-by-hour, not day-by-day: Camille-Hilaire Durand, *Détails particuliers sur la journée du 10 août 1792, par un bourgeois de Paris, témoin oculaire, suivis de deux Notices historiques…* (Paris, J.-J. Blaise, 1822), p.xxxix: "J'adopterai, dans ma narration, une forme plus rapide, et mieux appropriée, je crois, à la nature des événemens que j'entreprends de décrire."
[501] In only a few hours, for example, the Louvre was "besieged" and victory made "certain." During the night, the Commune had "all of a sudden" been "purged of its aristocratic venom": Jullien, *Journal*, p.221.
[502] Ibid, p.230-31: "La circonstance où nous nous trouvons est non seulement la plus violente crise de la Révolution, mais aussi la plus étonnante et la plus terrible secousse qu'ait éprouvée la monarchie depuis près de quatorze siècles qu'elle existe," p.219: "comme l'importance de la délibération [sur Lafayette] nécessite la lenteur, je vois encore une quinzaine avant le coup terrible qui décidera du destin de l'empire, au moins pour quelque temps," p.226: "Une second révolution, aussi miraculeuse que celle qui a vu prendre la Bastille ; mais qui nous coûte du sang et qui nous tient depuis vingt-quatre heures dans un espèce de frénésie."

compared the "triumph" of the 10 August to the experience of "fainting [*tomber en syncope*]," a blackout from which she had awoken to behold a nation regenerated overnight. "If you saw Paris now, and the history of what happened on the 10th was recounted to you," she informed her son Jules, "you would judge the thing impossible." France had been rendered unrecognisable, and the people, rejuvenated by the experience, "finally sense that they are humans and not slaves." "Posterity itself will refuse to believe it." The 10 August had warped French historical spacetime: "It seems that I have lived centuries in four days."[503]

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In order to disencumber France of its historical drag-weight, and thereby simultaneously regenerate the constitutional and moral basis of the nation, the Revolution would not merely need to move faster – it would need to move at warp speed.[504] It would, in fact, need to eradicate time altogether. The historical order of progress, therefore, would be in no order at all: history would simply fly past instantly, bereft of the temporal coordinates stipulated by clock or calendrical time. This warping of historical time was only possible because the violent velocity of 10 August had lifted the density of the French past. France "saw the antique edifice of an almighty monarchy collapse within just a few hours," recalled Daunou: "the weight of the old thrones was confounded and dissipated in a single day."[505] The advance of the future was rendered instantly realisable since the past had ceased to exert its historical-gravitational force upon the present. The historical translocation of France would only happen, however, if the ordinary duration of historical time were reduced to an experiential triviality. The *journée* would need to destroy *durée*.

This is why, on 10 August, it was not time but history that was perceived to have accelerated: in fact, the velocity of lived time decreased as the pace of 'progress' quickened beyond all comprehension. Thus with time slowed down, but history speeded up, it became possible for the Parisian crowds to elongate the perceived duration of days, hours or even minutes in order to fit huge swathes of historical change into comparatively tiny temporal units. Fourteen centuries of French monarchical history was concluded within the course of an afternoon, remarked Mercier, who observed how, all of a sudden, "the word tyrant

[503] Ibid, p.223: "Ce qu'il y a de frappant c'est qu'à midi la funeste guerre était finie, et que la sécurité, non la sérénité était rétablie," p.233: "Quand je considère, dans le calme de la méditation, les maux auxquels nous venons d'échapper par le triomphe de vendredi, l'effroi me saisit au point de tomber en syncope," p.245: "Mon cher bon, si tu voyais Paris et que l'on te fît l'historique de ce qui s'y est passé le 10, tu jurerais la chose impossible," p.237: "[I]l semble que j'ai vécu des siècles en quatre jours."

[504] The notion of speed and political action is briefly theorised in, Paul Virilio, *Speed and Politics* (Cambridge, MA., MIT University Press, 2006), pp.44-45, and *Le Grand Accélérateur* (Paris, Éditions Galilée, 2010), pp.1-30.

[505] Pierre-Claude-François Daunou, *Discours prononcé par le Président de la Convention nationale, pour la fête du 10 août, le 23 thermidor, l'an troisième de la République française, une et indivisible* (Paris, l'Imprimerie Nationale, Thermidor l'an III), p.2.

replaced that of king in every mouth."[506] The suspension, and eventual abolition, of the Bourbon monarchy confirmed the rapidity of this transformation. "You have decreed the abolition of royalty," declared the commune de Bléré in a congratulatory address to the Assembly: "You have advanced the Revolution by several centuries!"[507] Observations such as these undermined time as a meaningful measurement of human events. The 10 August would take the French nation, threatened by the endless duration of linear time, to a space beyond time: the 'future' that many of the insurrectionary agitators foresaw, after all, was not chronologically distinctive or temporally measurable; it was directed towards a time*less* future.

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Three days after the suspension of the monarchy, Condorcet presented a report on the *journée* to the Assembly. Whilst it was "the duty" of the Assembly, he declared, to make laws only after "mature and prudent examination," on 10 August "the patience of the people was exhausted," and "all of sudden, they appeared entirely united with the same aim and the same will." The suspension of the executive power "appeared to the representatives of the people" as the "soul means of saving France and liberty."[508] For Condorcet, who was desperate to retroactively legitimise the Assembly's extra-constitutional position, the political momentum unleashed by the people on 10 August was designed to affect the consolidation and, ultimately, the completion of the Revolution.[509] Now "that the people have taken charge," agreed the Jacobin deputy, Jacques Pinet, the nation – purged of its prevaricators and temporisers – could move forward "in giant strides." "We must profit from the situation and complete the revolution."[510]

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[506] Louis Sébastien Mercier, *Le Nouveau Paris* (6 vols., Paris, chez Fuchs, 1797), I, p.200: "Le mot tyran remplaçoit celui de roi dans toutes les bouches."
[507] *AP*, LXVIII, p.234: "[V]ous avez décrété l'abolition de la royauté. Vous avez avancé la Révolution de plusieurs siècles!"
[508] *AP*, XLVII, p.97: "Il était de son devoir de ne prononcer qu'après un examen mûr et réfléchi, après une discussion solennelle, après avoir entendu et pesé toutes les opinions; mais la patience du peuple était épuisée: tout à coup, il a paru tout entier réuni dans un même but et dans une même volonté. […] [R]ien ne put arrêter la vengeance du peuple qui éprouvait une trahison nouvelle, au moment même où il venait se plaindre de celles dont il avait longtemps été la victime. […] [I]l faut du temps pour assembler de nouveau représentants du peuple ; et quoique l'Assemblée nationale ait pressé les époques des opérations que cette convocation nécessite ; quoiqu'elle ait accéléré le moment où elle doit cesser de porter le poids de la chose publique, de manière à éviter le plus léger soupçon de vues ambitieuses, le terme de quarante jours aurait encore exposé la patrie à de grands malheurs, et le peuple à des mouvements dangereux, si l'on eût laissé au roi l'exercice des pouvoirs que la Constitution lui a conférés ; et la suspension de ces pouvoirs a paru aux représentants du peuple le seul moyen de sauver la France et la liberté."
[509] On Condorcet and constituent power, see: Lucien Jaume, 'Citizen and State under the French Revolution,' in Bo Stråth, Quentin Skinner, eds., *States and Citizens* (Cambridge, CUP, 2003), pp.131-44; Williams, *Condorcet and Modernity*, pp.81-88; Anne Elizabeth Burlingame, *Condorcet: The Torch-Bearer of the French Revolution* (Seattle, WA., Stratford Company, 1930), pp.140-42.
[510] Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, p.196.

In the days and weeks that followed, little was achieved by way of revolutionary conclusion: the Republic still moved too slowly. When Roland appeared before the Assembly on 17 September, for example, demanding that "measures be taken to ensure the force of the law" – to punish those who had voted to spare Lafayette before 10 August, and to restore order across France – he reminded the deputies that as long as "eight days ago" he had asked for something to be done, "and in the circumstances in which we find ourselves, days are like centuries."[511] Although France continued to experience the temporal aftershocks of the *journée*, the uchronia – the timeless terminus of the Revolution – that 10 August was supposed to herald continued to drift into duration. By the spring of 1793, as grain prices climbed and the assignats collapsed, the National Convention was once again host to hordes of Parisian petitioners.[512] On 23 May, a register of the deliberations of the section de la Fraternité was read aloud before the Convention, in which the deputies were called upon "to affect another *journée* of 10 August."[513] Eight days later and an impatient people got their wish as an insurrectionary mob descended upon the chamber.[514]

As the demonstrators filed in, Chaumette began his address. "Citizen legislators," he declared, "the citizens of Paris, tired of seeing their destinies forever floating in uncertainty, wish to finally fix them invariably."

> Everyday we learn of new betrayals, of new crimes; everyday we are disturbed by the discovery and reanimation of new conspiracies; everyday new troubles agitate the Republic, and are ready to drag it into their tempestuous whirlwinds, to hurl it into the immeasurable abyss of the centuries to come.

The past, in other words, would pre-empt the future by folding itself back in upon the present and consigning the nascent Republic to "the immeasurable abyss" of the forthcoming "centuries." The radiant future of the Revolution would thus be consumed by the oppressive emptiness – the duration – of time itself. Such rhetoric made the *journée* coterminous with a certain political speed. The revolutionaries would need to defeat their enemies before they themselves were defeated: "If we do not outpace them, they will outpace us." The counterstrategy was simple: the Convention, with the support of the French people, would need to once again warp time. Citing the "the wicked struggle which has continued since 1789 between the children of the nation" – the regenerated citizen – "and those who have abandoned it" – the counterrevolutionary – Chaumette declared: "Let us hurl between them

[511] *Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur* (17 September, 1792), XIII, p.722.
[512] Marc Bouloiseau, *The Jacobin Republic, 1792-1794* (trans. Jonathan Mandelbaum), (Cambridge, CUP, 1972), pp.64-82.
[513] *AP*, LXV, p.221: "faire une journée du 10 août"
[514] On the 31 May to 2 June insurrection, which consumed the Girondin faction and installedd the Jacobins in power, see: Morris Slavin, *The Making of an Insurrection: Parisian Sections and the Gironde* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1986), pp.76-109.

and us the barrier of eternity!"[515] The idea that the accomplishments of the Revolution could not only be overturned but also actively reversed suggests that Chaumette, like many of his fellow *enragés*, could not conceive of a unidirectional linearity to historical time. As Billaud-Varenne had warned back in July 1792, time's arrow was pliable. The only means of saving the Revolution was therefore to establish a time barrier – "eternity" – between past and present, and to jettison the Revolution's enemies into the untraversable void.[516] The Girondin faction made a suitable sacrifice; they were expunged from the Convention on 2 June.

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More than a year after the events of 10 August, then, the radical Parisian sections were rethinking the "gulf" presented by linear revolutionary time as a distinct advantage. It was a means of blocking the historical time tunnel through which France had seemingly travelled, and through which the forces of counterrevolution wished to drag it backwards. Once again, it would require an inordinate level of violence. As one supportive deputy declared, there was "no more time to temporise": "Paris, like Mount Etna, must vomit the carbonised aristocracy from its core," rupturing the political landscape of the nation in a single, pyroclastic belch.[517] The purpose of the revolutionary *journées* was to repudiate the linear, progressive flow of time imagined by the *philosophes* of the liberal Enlightenment.[518] The temporal structure of human history was warped by the violent manifestations of the popular will; the people thereby sought to reshape the future-orientated trajectories and prognostications of the National Assembly, which, prior to the 10 August, had primarily apostrophised a lay-Turgotian reading of historical speed. The pace of Enlightenment progress, however inexorable, was rejected as simply too slow.

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[515] *AP,* LXXIII, p.411: "Citoyens législateurs! Les citoyens de Paris, las de voir leurs destinées trop longtemps incertaines et flottantes, veulent enfin les fixer invariablement." "Tous les jours nous apprenons de nouvelles trahisons, de nouveaux forfaits; tous les jours nous sommes inquiétés par la découverte et la renaissance de nouveaux complots; tous les jours de nouveaux troubles agitent la République, et sont prêts à l'entraîner dans leurs tourbillons orageux et à la précipiter dans l'abîme insondé des siècles à venir." "Il est temps, législateurs, de faire casser la lute impie qui dure depuis 1789, entre les enfants de la nation et ceux qui l'ont abandonnée," p.412: "Si nous ne les devançons pas, ils nous devanceront. Jetons entre eux et nous la barrière de l'éternité!"

[516] On Hebertistes extremism, see: Michael L. Kennedy, *The Jacobin Clubs in the French Revolution, 1793-1795* (New York, NY., Berghahn Books, 2005), pp.71-87; Paul Mansfield, 'Collot d'Herbois at the Committee of Public Safety: A Revaluation,' *The English Historical Review* 103 (408, July 1988), pp.565-87.

[517] *AP*, LXXIII, p.414: "Il n'est plus temps de temporiser. […] Paris, comme le mont Etna, doit vomir l'aristocratie calcinée, de son sein."

[518] On the liberal Enlightenment (and its betrayal) and the conceptualization of progress: Jonathan Israel, *Revolutionary Ideas: An Intellectual History of the French Revolution from The Rights of Man to Robespierre* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2014), pp.1-5, 695-708; Anne Sa'adah, *The Shaping of Liberal Politics in Revolutionary France: A Comparative Perspective* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1990), pp.78-146; Genevieve Lloyd, *Enlightenment Shadows* (Oxford, OUP, 2013), pp.155-68, which also includes a useful bibliographic essay on the matter of the liberal vs. radical Enlightenment(s), pp.169-81.

IV. Liquid Time

It was widely accepted that the United States would disintegrate upon the conclusion of the Revolutionary War.[519] "It was taken for granted," Joseph Priestley observed, "that the moment America had thrown off the yoke of Great Britain, the different states would go to war among themselves."[520] By 1783, a confluence of circumstances – the defeat of the impost in 1781, a national tariff that would have given Congress the power to impose a 5% duty on imports in order repay crippling war debts; the near-miss Newburgh mutiny in 1783, where exhausted and unpaid soldiers threatened violent action against Congress; the collapse in the system of requisitions – imperilled the political stability of the Republic.[521] This would remain so, warned the marquis de Chastellux, "till you order your confederation better, till you take measures in common to pay debts, which you contracted in common, and till you have a form of government."[522]

As the war reached its conclusion, temporal metaphors shifted in their descriptive detail, displacing the sensation of compression or acceleration that was common to the Revolution, and instead coming to connote the liquid changeability of historical experience.[523] In October 1780, as winter closed in on the military encampment at the Passaic Falls in New Jersey, George Washington wrote a despairing letter to Lafayette. Outlining his displeasure at the slow sanctioning of military provisions by Congress, he observed: "Time slides away so fast and we have so little before us," that "every moment" has become "infinitely precious."[524] In a further letter to George Mason, Washington observed how, in order to "continue our struggles," America would need to "have a permanent force – not a force that is constantly fluctuating, & sliding from under us as a pedestal of Ice would leave a Statue in a summers day." The efficacy of political power rested precariously on the fluidity of time and history. This was because "we have lived upon expedients 'till we can live no longer, and it

[519] Charles R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States, 1783-1795* (Dallas, TX., Southern Methodist University Press, 1969); John Francis Mercer, a Virginia lawyer, observed how "the judicious Men who have lately return'd from Europe, all agree, that the prevalent opinion there is that we are verging fast towards anarchy & confusion, & some of them say, they were frequently asked by men otherwise well informed, whether we have any thing like Government yet remaining among us…": to James Madison (12 November, 1784), *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XXII, p.16.
[520] Joseph Priestley, *Letters to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke: Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, J. Johnson, 1791), pp.146-7: Priestley added, with hindsight: "But the event has not verified the prediction, nor is it at all probable that it ever will."
[521] Donald Stabile, *The Origins of American Public Finance: Debates over Money, Debt, and Taxes in the Constitutional Era, 1776-1838* (Westport, CT., Greenwood Publishing Group, 1998), pp.22-48; E. Wayne Carp, *To Starve the Army at Pleasure: Continental Army Administration and American Political Culture, 1775-1783* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1984), pp.153-68, 189-218.
[522] Marquis de Chastellux to Gouverneur Morris (8 December, 1784), in John Catanzariti, E. James Ferguson, eds., *The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784* (7 vols., Pittsburgh, PA., University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984), IX, p.611.
[523] The liquefaction of post-revolutionary perceptions of temporality has briefly been discussed with reference to the political thought of Thomas Jefferson: Spahn, *Thomas Jefferson, Time and History*, pp.76-77.
[524] Washington to Lafayette (19 May, 1780).

may truly be said that the history of this war is a history of false hopes, & temporary devices."[525] For Washington, the prevalent sense of chaos was not so much the product of acceleration as multi-direction. History seemed structureless, directionless – subject, at "every moment," to be knocked off course by mere circumstance. After the Revolutionary War, this came increasingly to be expressed in temporalised terms. Living upon "expedients" until "we can live no longer," whilst clinging to "temporary devices," had sent the experience of the present "sliding" through "a history of false hopes," ceaselessly swerving past near misses and constantly confronting disintegration.

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When the novelist Margaret Bayard Smith visited Thomas Jefferson at Monticello in 1809, a year after he had retired from the presidency, she found him in a pensive mood. Asked for his reminiscences of the Revolution, he mused: "The circumstances of our country at my entrance into life, were such that every honest man felt himself compelled to take a part," and "when once engaged, new circumstances were continually arising […], which has never since allowed me to leave the course into which I had been impelled by the force of events."[526]

Jefferson was not merely alluding to the content (the events) of that era, but to the quality (the experiential nature) of history itself. Under the impact of revolution, as "new circumstances" were seen to be "continually arising," America was plunged into the "irruptive violence of time."[527] History could no longer cohere to the chronological or linear unification of temporal successions that had previously delineated a classical taxonomy of time; the interrelation of past, present and future was now subject to "the force of events," which had the effect of "breaking up time."[528] Between the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 and the convocation of the Constitutional Convention in 1787, the once interconnected, successional hierarchy (or chain) of historical time, which charted causality along chronologically coherent (time-)lines, deteriorated. The connection between time, history and power was rendered "rhizomic" – it no longer possessed any discernable network-like structure. There consequently emerged, amidst the private writings and public utterances of the revolutionary generation, the sense of a continual historical happening.[529]

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[525] George Washington to George Mason (22 October, 1780).
[526] 'Margaret Bayard Smith's Account of a Visit to Monticello (29 July – 2 August 1809)', J. Jefferson Looney, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*. Retirement Series (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2004), I, p.386-401; this recollection was later revised in an expanded form by the Richmond *Enquirer* in 1823.
[527] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (London, Routledge, 2004), p.144; see: Peter Fritzsche, 'The Ruins of Modernity,' in Lorenz, Bevernage, eds., *Breaking Up Time*, pp.57-68.
[528] Foucault, *The Order of Things*, p.334.
[529] A rhizomic historical experience "has no beginning or end; it is always in the middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*," Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (trans. Brian Massumi), (London, Continuum, 2004), p.27.

During the 1780s, the future "course" of American history no longer appeared certain, or solid, but rather replete with "multiplicities."[530] The experience of the present was plunged into a continually shifting matrix of multiplying potential futures, which, upon appearance, did not seem to reference a prior unity, either in historical experience or temporal structure. When the tempo at which the future supplanted the present reached a critical velocity, the experience of change was no longer perceived as a form of transformation in the fixed structures of existence, but as a form of ceaseless indeterminacy.[531] In his circular letter of 8 June 1783, in which he made the first of his numerous farewells, Washington conjured an image of the American "present" as a single moment saturated by an infinitude of consequential choices. For the citizens of the United Stated, it was "their choice," and it depended upon "their conduct," whether "they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptable and miserable as a Nation":

> This is the Time of their political probation, this is the moment when the eyes of the whole World are turned upon them, this is the moment to establish or ruin their national Character forever, this is the favourable moment to give such a tone to our Federal Government, as will enable it to answer the ends of its institution, or this may be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the powers of the Union, annihilating the cement of the Confederation.[532]

It was "yet to be decided, whether the Revolution" – which Washington implicitly portrays here as an ongoing act – "must ultimately be considered as a blessing or a curse." The liquefaction of the present was "annihilating the cement" of the union, and contributing to the diminishing belief that there was any attainable *telos* to history.

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Within this "fluctuating" present the authority of long-termism collapsed, heightening the (especially Federalist) fear that political *temporariness* would soon see the republic "insensibly glide" into "Anarchy," as Edward Carrington wrote, when "the present fabric

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[530] The references, in particular, to the "multiplicity of events," or "multiplicity of affairs," in the letters of congressional delegates during this period are numerous, see, for example: *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, John Adams to William Gordon (8 April, 1777), VI, p.552; James Lovell to Joseph Whipple (6 February, 1778), IX, p.41; Henry Laurens to George Washington (5 May, 1778), IX, p.609; Josiah Converse to Job Whipple (29 December, 1784), XXII, p.336.

[531] I use the term "historical happening" as a contextualised version of Hartmut Rosa's "frenetic standstill," which associates the perception of extreme historical speed with the completely incomprehensibility of present experience, and has more contemporary connotations with the pace of technological change: Rosa, *Social Acceleration*, p.110.

[532] George Washington, 'From George Washington to the States, 8 June 1783,' in John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (39 vols., Washington, DC., Government Printing Office, 1931-44), XXVI, pp.484-89; on Washington's numerous national declarations, see: Matthew Spalding, Patrick J. Garrity, *A Sacred Union of Citizens: George Washington's Farewell Address and the American Character* (New York, NY., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1996).

gives way."[533] In the context of a "continually arising" historicity of events, the institutional framework of American power was seen to lose its solidity, especially by those who felt that they had done most to ensure its establishment. Imposing order upon this ceaselessly shifting perception of time proved beyond the capabilities of Congress. The members of Congress, meanwhile, "are so constantly changing," remarked Josiah Bartlett, "that before they get acquainted with the business they leave Congress and new members totally ignorant of the past transactions are appointed in their stead."[534] Annual alterations in the composition of congressional delegations was further undermined chronic absenteeism; between 1785 and 1786, for example, the congressional turnover rate reached fifty-eight percent; committees, meanwhile, regularly disintegrated as delegates drifted in and out of Philadelphia, often departing, completely unannounced, for months at a time.[535] After 1779 no single member occupied the presiding chair for longer than twelve months, and sessions were considered a success if the body managed to reach a quorum.[536] This eroded the institutional memory of Congress, causing a "great uneasiness," abbreviating the accumulation of political experience. Yet a "speedy remedy" to the problem seemed impossible, observed Bartlett, given "the *multiplicity* of business that is *daily* crowding on Congress and the time it takes to transact matters" in an Assembly filled with "lawyers and other gentlemen who love to talk."[537] As Hamilton noted in February 1783, it was "a body not governed by reason [or] foresight, but by circumstances," incapable of charting a course towards futurity. Reeling from Newburgh and confronted by the collapse of both federal and state finances, Congress would probably "[not] take the proper measures," Hamilton sighed, "and if we do not, a few [months] may open an embarrassing scene."[538] As the farewell circular attested, Washington did not believe

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[533] Edward Carrington to James Madison (13 June, 1787): *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XXIV, p.329; "anti-Federalist" criticisms of these positions are detailed in chapter 4.

[534] A North Carolina delegate, Samuel Johnston agreed, writing to his state governor, James Iredell, in April 1781: "the frequent change of the members in almost every instance break in upon the best digested systems, and renders inefficient the best concerted measures": Samuel Johnston to James Iredell (8 April, 1781): *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XVII, p.138

[535] Henry Laurens, who was elected president in July 1777, observed the chaos of short-termism of Congress, when he remarked that he had "been witness to a Report made by a Committee of the Whole, which had been entered upon the Journal, superseded by a new Resolution even without reference to the Report. A resolution carried…entered, and half an hour after, reconsidered and expunged. When I add that such irregularity is the work of almost every day, you will not wonder that I wish to be anywhere but in Congress": Henry Laurens to John Lewis Gervais (8 September, 1777), in *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, VII, p.365.

[536] Calvin C. Jillson and Rick K. Wilson have devised a table detailing the turnover rates of congressional delegates as well as the duration of each presidency, the longest of which is John Hancock's term, twenty-one months, after the issuing of the Declaration of Independence: *Congressional Dynamics: Structure, Coordination, and Choice in the First American Congress, 1774-1789* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1994), p.156, 77.

[537] Josiah Bartlett to John Langdon (18 August, 1778), in Frank C. Mevers, ed., *The Papers of Josiah Bartlett* (Hanover, NH., University Press of New England, 1979), p.208; on militarism and the politics of national memory, see: Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp.11-48.

[538] Alexander Hamilton to George Washington (13 February, 1783), in *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XIX, p.689.

that this ceaselessly "shifting" experience of time was a peculiarity of war: it had become the new normal.

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Contemporaries regularly portrayed themselves as passive, powerless observers to this process, as if they too were "sliding" or "gliding" over thawing ice. In June 1786, David Humphreys described how his fellow citizens had become "uneasy" and begun to "prognosticate" further political ruptures, yet they could not attribute a cause or source, much less an outcome, to this gathering sense of multiplicity – "they hardly know how or why."[539]

A month later, Stephen Higginson, a former Massachusetts delegate to the Continental Congress, was convinced that America was "verging fast to a Crisis." The problem, as he saw it, was that "the people at large have for several years lived in a manner much more expensive and luxurious than they have Ability to support." During the Revolutionary War the printing of paper money had enabled the colonies to inflate themselves out of debt.[540] When Congress attempted to rid the states of paper currencies, and restore government credit, the repayment schedules of state debts acquired a sudden urgency. For Higginson, the contraction of liquidity that occurred during the early 1780s mirrored a simultaneous contraction in the liquid qualities of time: as the former dwindled, so too did the latter, tightening political manoeuvrability in the present, and setting the scene for the Union to become "unhinged, and [a] revolution [to] take place."[541] Interest rates rocketed: usually capped at between 5 to 6 percent per year, by 1784-85 they were increasing at around 12 percent per month, which spelt ruin farmers and simple artisans.[542] In turn this created vocal demands, particular in rural Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, for further issuances of paper money.[543]

By demanding the states meet their requisitions in "hard-cash" repayments, Congress caused credit liquidity to dry up, in turn squeezing the time spans available for debt repayments themselves. This is how metaphors of liquid time operated: they could connote streams, circulations, or a gushing onset of events, but they also evoked sudden stagnations,

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[539] Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages*, p.58.
[540] Ben Baack, 'Forging a Nation State: The Continental Congress and the Financing of the War of American Independence,' *Economic History Review* 54 (4, November 2001), pp.639-56.
[541] Stephen Higginson to John Adams (July 1786).
[542] Terry Bouton, 'The Trials of the Confederation,' in Kamensky and Gray, *The Oxford Handbook to the American Revolution*, pp.370-85, here: p.375.
[543] Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York, NY., Hill and Wang, 2007), pp.65-84; the Exeter Rebellion of 20 September, 1786, which took place around the same time of as Shays's Rebellion, was sparked by popular protests for the printing of paper money: Jeremy Belknap, *The History of New Hampshire* (2 vols., Boston, Bradford and Read, 1813), II, pp.326-51; Shays's Rebellion is analysed briefly below and at length in chapter 4; on paper money and Shays's Rebellion, see: David P. Szatmary, *Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection* (Amherst, MA., University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), pp.37-50.

evaporations; the common factor is instability, and the ways in which the connection of events across historical time seemed never to achieve fixed connections. As William Manning later observed, "the creditor in paper money times would take neither principal nor interest," but by the mid-1780s, "debtors were called on for five or six years' interest" in a single repayment.[544] The prognosticated processes by which the American Republic would disintegrate were therefore charged with an unpredictable, unruly tempo. James Warren acknowledge this fact in a gloomy letter to John Adams, written in the autumn of 1786. During the Revolution, he observed, "my small Efforts were Joined with yours, & others for many Years in rearing A Glorious Fabrick on Foundations that should have been as permanent as Time," yet now that "Fabrick" had "suffered to fall into ruin in less than half the Time it took to Build it."[545]

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"Never was a poor fly more completely entangled in a cobweb than Congress in their paper currency." This problem, as the North Carolina delegate Samuel Johnston observed, was "the daily subject of conversation."[546] During the war, obligations amounting to $266,000,000 were eradicated by currency depreciation.[547] Franklin compared the issue of bills of credit to "a wonderful Machine," which "performs its Office when we issue it; it pays & clothes Troops, & provides Victuals & Ammunition; and when we are oblig'd to issue a Quantity excessive, it pays itself off by depreciation."[548] In view of the political difficulties of levying taxes upon a citizenry who had recently pronounced a revolution over the matter, the fiat currency issued by Congress, which so rapidly depreciated in the hands of its holders, was a substitution for taxation. Congress resorted to printing a paper medium of exchange, backed by a promise of a future redemption, in the form of tax anticipation notes. "[T]here is no nation that is able to carry on war by the taxes which can be raised within the year," remarked Adams.[549] Paper money offered the government a far speedier form of raising revenue.[550]

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[544] William Manning, 'Some Proposals for Making Restitution to the Original Creditors of Government' (1790), in Michael Merrill and Sean Wilentz, *The Key of Liberty: The Life and Democratic Writings of William Manning, 'A Laborer,' 1747-1814* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1993), pp.95-116, here: p.104.
[545] James Warren to John Adams (22 October, 1786), in Gregg L. Lint, ed., *The Adams Papers* (37 vols., Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1996), XVIII, p.486.
[546] Samuel Johnston to James Iredell (8 April, 1781): *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XVII, p.138
[547] Robert A. Becker, 'Currency, taxation, and finance, 1775-1787,' in Jack P. Greene and J.R. Pole, *A Companion to the American Revolution* (Oxford, Blackwell, 2000), pp.388-97, here: p.393.
[548] Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Cooper (22 April, 1779), in Barbara B. Oberg, ed., *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 1992), XXIX, p.355.
[549] John Adams to the comte de Vergennes (22 June, 1780), in Gregg L. Lint, Richard Alan Ryerson, eds., *The Adams Papers*, IX, p.461.
[550] "The importance of liquidity," observes Robert E. Wright, "was not apparent to Americans until the Revolution," because "until the deprivations of war they had little need for it": *Origins of Commercial Banking in America, 1750-1800* (Lanham, MD., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2001), p.67; Jennifer J. Baker, *Securing*

By 1779, however, the purchasing power of the "Continental currency" had dwindled to a point of near worthlessness.[551] "A wagon-load of money will scarcely purchase a wagon-load of provisions," moaned Washington.[552] This rapid depreciation of paper money, and the concomitant explosion in the price of basic commodities, was a disorientating experience. When Congress sought to address the "excess in its quantity," observed one diarist, the resultant damage to public credit forced the value of the circulating medium to "fall in a few weeks from four to ten, and in a few months to twenty to one." Prices began rising on a daily basis. In Boston in 1779 a pound of butter sold for $12, a barrel of flour for $1,575. "Hundreds suffered by it."[553] Washington scolded his stepson, Jacky Custis, for repeatedly stalling in meeting his debt obligations so as to be able to repay stepfather in depreciated currency: "You might as well attempt to pay me in old newspapers and almanacs, with which I can purchase nothing."[554] Total uncertainty as to the future-value of money meant nothing could be taken for granted nor nothing adequately predicted; yet still the financial demands of the war grew, and still Congress continued to print.[555]

Paper money deranged financial temporality.[556] In a circular letter, issued to the states in 1779, John Jay declared that Congress had "resolved to stop the press," calling upon the aid of the states "for supplies by loans and taxes." This was "the price of the liberty, the peace, and the safety of yourselves and posterity." The task of "forming a strong chain of connection" binding "yourself and posterity," creating a coherence between present and future, was undermined by the paper money means of meeting debt obligations, which undercut American credit and threatened to reduce the duration of American "liberty" and "safety" to a mere historical moment: "Let it never be said that America had no sooner become independent than she became insolvent." In a prefiguration of Montesquiou's financial report to the National Assembly, Jay predicted that if the "infant glories" of America were to become "obscured and tarnished" by "broken contracts" and debt defaults, then the Republic would be ruined "in the very hour when all the nations of the earth were admiring and almost adoring the splendour of her rising."[557]

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the Commonwealth: Debt, Speculation, and Writing in the Making of Early Republic (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005).

[551] Gordon S. Wood, 'Interest and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution,' in Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein, Edward C. Carter, eds., *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity* (Chapel Hill, NC., North Carolina University Press, 1987), pp.69-112.

[552] Walter Stahr, *John Jay: Founding Father* (New York, NY., Hambledon and London, 2005), p.105.

[553] Frank Moore, ed., *Diary of the American Revolution: From Newspaper and Original Documents* (2 vols., New York, NY., Charles Scribner, 1860), II, p.422-23; Ben Baack, 'America's first monetary policy: inflation and seigniorage during the Revolutionary War,' *Financial History Review* 15 (2, October 2008), pp.107-121, see: p.115, 119.

[554] Ron Chernow, *Washington: A Life* (London, Allen Lane, 2010), p.

[555] On the rapidity of price inflation, see: Janet A. Riesman, 'Money, Credit, and Federalist Political Economy,' in Beeman, Botein, Carter, eds., *Beyond Confederation*, pp.128-61.

[556] Christian Lotz, *The Capitalist Schema: Time, Money, and the Culture of Abstraction* (New York, NY., Lexington Books, 2014), p.xviii, 73-112.

[557] John Jay, 'Circular Letter to the States (13 September, 1779),' p.235, 235-36.

By the early 1780s, America was awash with paper currencies. In 1777, Congress, in despair at the speed of depreciation, produced "certificates of indebtedness" designed to cover the costs of confiscation (though they carried no firm date of future redemption). In 1781, Robert Morris, the superintendent of finance, issued "promissory notes" which, although redeemable in a definite time scale (often between thirty to sixty days), foundered on the evaporating credit of Congress.[558] By 1783, Congress relinquished the basic sovereign functions of minting a national medium of exchange: a smorgasbord of separate currencies proliferated amongst the states.[559]

Towards the end of the War, in an attempt to settle the financial instability created by these depreciative monetary spirals, many colonial legislatures sought to eliminate paper currencies altogether. Even those who had once lauded its virtues now lamented its deleterious consequences. In a *Dissertation* on paper money, published in February 1786, Thomas Paine located "its uncertain and *fluctuating* value," as "continually awakening or creating new schemes of deceit." Whilst the issuing of paper bills of credit was easy "at *first*," observed Paine, it served "as a trap to catch people in the *last*." Because it "operates as an anticipation of the next year's taxes," eating into future revenues, it was also "the dearest money there is." In an alternative liquid metaphor, Paine even compared the temporality of paper money to "dram-drinking," for whilst "it relieves for a moment by deceitful sensation," it quickly "diminishes the natural heat, and leaves the body worse than it found it."[560]

In July 1782, Morris presented delegates with his proposals to consolidate the war debts of the various states into a single debt, the retirement of which would rest with Congress. Whilst this amounted to a programme of "liquidation," insofar as it verified both the financial liabilities of the Republic and the assets available to discharge them under Congressional supervision, it would also "provide *Solid funds* for the national Debt." The consolidated debt obligation was to be underwritten by the sale of interest-bearing "public securities," which would, in turn, restore confidence in government credit because nationally levied taxes would enable Congress to meet a regularised schedule of debt interest repayments. Repayments were to be made gradually: according to his estimations, the debt

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[558] On Robert Morris's controversial efforts as finance minister of the nascent Republic, see: Charles Rappleye, *Robert Morris: Financier of the American Revolution* (New York, NY., Simon & Schuster, 2010), pp.307-57; Michael P. Schoderbek, 'Robert Morris and Reporting for the Treasury under the U.S. Continental Congress,' *Accounting Historians Journal* 26 (2, December 1999), pp.1-34.

[559] When enthusiasts for creating a single, central bank of the United States discussed their ideas, they inferred the liquid metaphor: it would act like "a vortex for Drawing all the money" in the nation together: 'Proceedings and Observations of the Committee of Finance (7-23 November, 1780),' in *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XVI, p.311; with breath-taking understatement, Congress duly acknowledged: "our paper currency, notwithstanding the settled solid basis on which it is founded, is multiplied beyond the rules of good policy." See: Woody Holton, 'Did Democracy Cause the Recession that Led to the Constitution,' *Journal of American History* 92 (2, September 2005) pp.442-69.

[560] Thomas Paine, *Dissertations on Government, the Affairs of the Bank, and Paper Money* (Philadelphia, PA., Charles Cist, 1838), p.46, 52, 51; on Paine's economic thought, see Jack Fruchtman, Jr., *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Paine* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), ch.5.

assumed by Congress would be approximately $30 million, but provisions for the payment of interest to service the debt would only reach £2 million per year. The revenue required was to be derived primarily from duties on imports, a land tax, and an excise tax on distilled whiskey. "A Public Debt supported by Public Revenue," he insisted, "will prove the Strongest Cement to keep our Confederacy together." Thus the "Cement" of "Solid money" was preferable to the liquid unpredictability of paper since it provided a firm foundation upon which to establish "credit in the future."[561] This was a cause of perennial peril: "the Political existence of American depends on the Accomplishment of this plan," observed Morris, who several times confessed to "hourly Apprehensions" of the collapse of credit. "In this Situation not having Money, the States neglecting to raise Taxes," and Congress burdened by "heavy Demands," Morris "hourly expected" to see the entire financial edifice of the United States – and his own personal credit – "sink under."[562] Developing a consolidated national debt, financed by a centrally supervised system of taxation, would enable Congress to accumulate "credit in the future," stabilising the trans-historical relationship between past debts, future obligations and present revenues. Morris therefore hoped that the regularity and predictability of his servicing mechanism would, in effect, de-temporalise government debt.

The plan required the power to tax, and therefore an amendment of the Articles of Confederation, which Morris ultimately failed to attain. Unable to provide "*Solid funds*," Congress devolved its debt onto the states, where the individual obligations continued to be liquidated separately. Devoid of a debt consolidation and servicing programme grounded in specie tax revenue, the state governments were free to mortgage the future of the Union on the non-collateralised liquidity of paper money.

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The fluctuating liquidity of paper money situated the United States within a contingent temporality. The institutional mechanisms of debt redemption remained unconsolidated under Congressional supervision, forcing the Republic to strive "to maintain itself in a time not created by it, but rather given to it" by the unverifiable value durations of paper money.[563] This "temporary device" allowed the states to repay their separate debts through a general currency depreciation, which sacrificed the financial and political credit of the Union to the present whims of debtors and the past miscalculations of speculators.[564] For Paine, this was a

[561] Robert Morris to Nathaniel Appleton (16 April, 1782), in Catanzariti, Ferguson, eds., *The Papers of Robert Morris, 1781-1784*, V, p.4.
[562] Robert Morris to Timothy Pickering (30 July, 1782), ibid, VI, p.104, 179.
[563] Pocock, 'Modes of political and historical time,' p.92.
[564] On debt and speculation in the early Republic, see: E. J. Ferguson, *The Power of the Purse: A History of American Public Finance, 1776-1790* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p.251-88, and 'Speculation in the Revolutionary Debt: The Ownership of Public Securities in Maryland, 1790,' *Journal of*

form of financial practice that mirrored the practices of political power derived from the experience of revolutionary contingency:

> We have been so much habited to act in committees at the commencement of the dispute, and during the interregnum of government, and in many cases since, and to adopt expedients warranted by necessity […], suited to the spur and exigency of the moment, that a man transferred from a committee to a seat in the legislature, imperceptible takes with him the ideas and habits he has been accustomed to, and continues to think like a committee-man instead of a legislator, and to govern by the spirit rather than by the rule of the constitution and the principles of the republic.[565]

Meeting debt obligations by mere "expedients" such as paper money undercut the maintenance of public credit central to "the principles of the republic." Furthermore, this trapped America within an experience of time "suited to the spur and exigency of the moment," within a present unmoored from long-term commitments, both financial and constitutional.

Insolvency beckoned in the spring of 1787, when, in the six months before March, the treasury received just $663 in requisitions from the states.[566] On 8 February 1787, Congress approved a report from the Board of Treasury, declaring that, "the Crisis has arrived": the people "of these united states" would now need to observe "whether for want of *a timely exertion* in establishing a general revenue…they will hazard…the existence of the union."[567] By the autumn, New York was the latest state to reject Congressional plans for a programme of debt repayment when it obstructed the proposed impost.[568] "[W]hat will be the situation of our national affairs," Hamilton told the state assembly, "if they are left much longer to float in the chaos in which they are now involved?"[569] As government credit was swallowed by the immense liquidity of the American economy, any belief that the future was controllable or calculable evaporated. The perception of historical time was reduced to a random, disconnected sequence of moments, all of which pointed to the disintegration of the Union. By mid-summer, rural Massachusetts was in open rebellion.[570] The travails of the

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Economic History 14 (1954), pp.35-45; and more generally on chance and political life: Gerda Reith, *The Age of Chance: Gambling in Western Culture* (London, Routledge, 1999), pp.58-73.

[565] Paine, *Dissertation*, pp.12-13.

[566] Max M. Edling, *A Revolution in Favor of Government: Origins of the U.S. Constitution and the Making of the American State* (Oxford, OUP, 2003), p.155.

[567] *Journals of the Continental Congress*, XXXI, p.57.

[568] John P. Kaminski, 'New York: The Reluctant Pillar,' in Stephen L. Schechter, ed., *The Reluctant Pillar: New York and the Adoption of the Federal Constitution* (New York, NY., Rowman & Littlefield, 1985), pp.48-117, see: pp.56-58.

[569] Alexander Hamilton, 'Remarks on an Act Granting to Congress Certain Imposts and Duties to the New York Assembly,' in Harold C. Syrett, ed., *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (27 vols., New York, NY., Columbia University Press, 1962), IV, pp.91.

[570] This was the start of the so-called Shays's Rebellion, in which groups of rural militiamen, many of them veterans of the Revolutionary War, organised under the leadership of Daniel Shays to protest by violent force the tax collection and debt repayment policies of the state of Massachusetts: Calvin H. Johnson, *Righteous Anger at the Wicked States: The Meaning of the Founders' Constitution* (Cambridge, CUP, 2005), pp.202-22. This rebellion

Republic, Washington wrote, had "brought our politics and credit to the brink of a precipice [and] a step or two further must plunge us into a Sea of Troubles."[571] John Jay expressed similar fears for the future:

> Our affairs seem to lead to some crisis – some Revolution – something that I cannot foresee, or conjecture. I am uneasy and apprehensive – more so, than during the War – *Then* we had a fixed Object, and tho the means and time of attaining it were often problematical, yet I did firmly believe that we should ultimately succeed…The Case is now altered – we are going and doing wrong, and therefore I look forward to Evils and Calamities, but without being able to guess at the Instrument nature or measure of them.[572]

The union existed within a "State of uncertainty and *Fluctuation*": the historicity of the Republic was essentially formless – it was not fixed in time. Rather, as Jay implied, America was buffeted *by* time, adrift, the subject of potentially daily change. "A continuance of our present feeble political form is pregnant with daily evils," wrote a despondent Henry Lee Jr., as he observed the Shays's Rebellion gather speed: "Every day brings new information of the designs & preparations of the Malcontents."[573] The extraordinary mobility – the *liquidity* – of such consequential events scrambled the sequential coherence of historical experience. In this sense, the passage of historical time seemed more like a "torrent" than a "flow." The "course of human events" seemed multi-directional: whilst events had been thrown into "fluctuation" by the Revolution, the Republic remained afflicted by onrushing "affairs," the source, velocity and direction of which Jay could not "conjecture," much less "foresee." For Federalist observers America was like a sailboat in a storm, tossed about on "a Sea of Troubles," without any obvious anchorage, constantly afflicted by the imminent anticipation of wreckage.

V. Time Control:

The institutions and instruments devised by the National Convention, and later administered by the Committee of Public Safety, between March 1793 and June 1794 were meant to re-impose a sense of sequential coherence upon the passage of revolutionary events.[574] In reality,

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is analysed in depth in chapter 4; see: Sean Condon, *Shays's Rebellion: Authority and Distress in Post-Revolutionary America* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), pp.5-34.

[571] George Washington to Thomas Johnson (12 November, 1786), in Abbott, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, IV, pp.359-60.

[572] John Jay to George Washington (27 June, 1786), in Abbott, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, IV, pp.130-31.

[573] Henry Lee, Jr. to George Washington (11 November, 1786), in Abbott, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, IV, p.357.

[574] The classic study of the legislative programme of the Terror remains, R. R. Palmer, *Twelve Who Ruled: The Year of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1941); the best recent study is, Timothy Tackett, *Coming of the Terror in the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University

they confined the operations of the state to a single speed setting: acceleration. Despite an increasingly desperate desire to conclude the Revolution by stabilising the expression of political power under the aegis of a Republic of Virtue, revolutionary finality continually drifted into the future. Thus in order to reach this future, much heralded in the uchronic paeans of the Jacobins, the Republic would need to increase its historical tempo.[575] During the Terror, the Jacobin state devised a variety of artefacts and institutions for regulating the temporality of the Revolution. Historians have focused upon clock and calendrical reforms only because they are the most obviously time-related; in reality, huge swathes of governmental apparatus were turned towards time control. The Convention had "divided the day and the night according to decimal calculation," scoffed the royalist, Bertrand de Molleville, "but, despite the new timepieces ordered by republican artists, despite the law of suspects and the inquisition of the revolutionary committees," nothing could convert the French people to institutions which "upset them without enlightening them."[576] What is intriguing about these remarks is not the general tone of derision for the calendrical and horological reforms of 1793, but the invocation of the legal apparatus of the Jacobin Republic as synonymous with the artefacts of temporal control.[577] Molleville intimates that revolutionary law, and the institutions devised to impose it, possessed a purpose similar to the construction of decimal watches: namely, to remake time.

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Ultimately, of course, it was time – or the way its vicissitudes affected the practice of politics – that remade the state and the individual [Fig.8]. "We must make the laws conform to

Press, 2015); Dan Edelstein, *The Terror of Natural Right: Republicanism, the Cult of Nature, and the French Revolution* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2009); Eli Sagan, *Citizens & Cannibals: The French Revolution, the Struggle for Modernity, and the Origins of Ideological Terror* (Lanham, MD., Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Richard Ballard, *The Unseen Terror: The French Revolution in the Provinces* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2010); for a statistical evaluation of judicial executions during the Terror, see: Donald Greer, *The Incidence of the Terror during the French Revolution: a statistical interpretation* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1935); a comparative account of political and legal terror may be found in, Arno J. Mayer, *The Furies: violence and terror in the French and Russian Revolutions* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2000).

[575] Ozouf, 'La Révolution Française au Tribunal de l'Utopie,' in *De Révolution en République*, pp.738-54.

[576] Bertrand de Molleville, *Anecdotes du temps de la terreur* (Paris, L. Hachette, 1863), pp.26-7: "Un article du décret divisait le jour et la nuit suivant le calcul décimal; mais, malgré les montres nouvelles commandées à des artistes républicains, malgré la loi des suspects et l'inquisition des comités révolutionnaires, jamais on n'a pu plier un seul instant la nation française à cette institution qui la contrariait sans l'éclairer."

[577] Little has been written about the horological reforms of the French Revolution, interest has instead focused on the calendar; see: Catherine Cardinal, 'L'Heure Républicaine,' in Catherine Cardinal, ed., *La Révolution dans la Mesure du Temps: Calendrier Républicain, Heure Décimale, 1793-1805* (La Chaux-de-Fonds, Musée International d'Horlogerie, 1989), pp.64-80; see also, the report compiled by the National Convention into the means of reforming the hours of the day, held at, AN F17/1135: 'Rapport sur les questions relatives au nouveau systême horaire, fait par le jury nommé par le Décret de la Convention Nationale, du 4 Fructidor, l'an deux, & assemblé au Louvre, dans la Salle du Bureau de consultation des Art & Métiers, pour juger le Piéces du Concours (pluviôse, l'an IV)'

circumstances," remarked the *enragé* journalist, François Desfieux.[578] This process began with the trial of Louis XVI.[579] The machinations of the monarchy, Robespierre observed, had "forced" the nation "to resort to the right of rebellion," to return "to the state of nature," to chaos. The representatives had necessarily to invoke "that law which is the very foundation of society: the safety of the people." The trial, meanwhile, was without historical precedent: the prosecuting entity was the timeless body of the sovereign people; the defendant was a corrupted monarchy whose reign represented the fetid accretions of centuries of oppression. Under the guise of its legal forms, the Convention thus performed a kind of popular mimesis:

Fig. 8. 'Le Temps resserant les nœuds des frères et amis' (1794) http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb40250691n

"the trial of the tyrant *is* the insurrection," marvelled Robespierre.[580] Many of the institutions of the Terror, such as the Revolutionary Tribunal, would also become (regulated) judicial

[578] François-Alphonse Aulard, ed., *La Société des Jacobins: receuil de documents pour l'histoire du club des Jacobins* (6 vols., Paris, 1889-97), V, pp.67: "Il faut faire des lois conformes aux circonstances, sauf à les modifier en temps de paix."
[579] David P. Jordan, *The King's Trial: the French Revolution vs. Louis XVI* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 2004); Michael Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution: Speeches at the Trial of Louis XVI* (trans. Marian Rothstein), (New York, NY., Columbia Press, 1992); John Hardman, *Louis XVI, the silent king* (London, Arnold, 2000); Tadami Chizuka, 'L'idée de deux corps du roi dans le process de Louis XVI,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 310 (October 1997), pp.643-50.
[580] Robespierre's address is detailed in Walzer, *Regicide and Revolution*, pp.178-93; see also: Jesse Goldhammer, *The Headless Republic: Sacrificial Violence in Modern French Thought* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2005), pp.66-67; Marie-Hélène Huet, *Mourning Glory: The Will of the French Revolution* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), pp.177-78.

simulacra of (unpredictable) popular agitations. In the winter of 1793, in a letter to the local revolutionary committee of Moulins, Gabriel Perrotin, public prosecutor of Lyon, observed how the "revolutionary commission" of the city was "going to repeat the *septembrisade* of Paris by the same procedures, and with the approval of an order from the representatives which will promote its work."[581]

According to Sophie Wahnich, the anarchic, incoherent platform of public terror waged by the Parisian sans-culottes after the autumn of 1792 was derived from a widespread sense of fear. The charge sheet was lengthy, encompassing a sensation of imminent destruction at the hands of external enemies, and a fear of internal betrayal, dissension, or simply further disruption – from the defection of Dumouriez in April 1793, and the nascent civil war in the Vendée, to the continued threat of revolutionary upheaval in the capital. By the summer of 1793, France was a Republic unified by a single emotion: *effroi*.[582] The unregulated expression of the popular sense of dread forced the Convention to reterritorialize the sphere of public emotions by declaring a state-sanctioned Terror on 5 September 1793. Popular anxiety would thus be assuaged by the state monopolisation of fear. "We can only govern through fear," observed Danton.[583] This may seem like a justification of Terror, yet as Marisa Linton rightly observes, "to explain is not to justify." With the perceived speed of historical time racing beyond comprehension, Terror was the only viable system of temporal – and thus political – regulation available to the state. Whilst Wahnich is surely correct to state that Terror "was aimed at establishing limits to the sovereign exception," she is mistaken in assuming that it was successful in "putting a brake on the legitimate violence of the people."[584] It unquestionably gave the public an "institutionalized form" of vengeance, but it simply made the state an instrument of a gargantuan, and ultimately self-destructive form of historical acceleration. As a legal simulacrum of popular agitation, the Terror eventually recreated the sense of constant crisis that characterised the impatience of the summer of 1792. The regime of historicity imagined by the curators of Terror was certainly "prompt" and "inflexible," but it was not meant to be endless, nor endlessly accelerative.[585]

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[581] Gabriel Perrotin, cited in Abbé Guillon de Montléon, *Mémoires de M. l'abbé Guillon de Montléon* (Paris, Baudoin frères, 1824), p.403-4: "La commission révolutionnaire de Lyon va répéter la *septembrisade* de Paris par les mêmes procédés, et de plus avec l'autorisation d'un arrêté des représentans [sic] qui favorisera sa marche." On "federalist" revolt during the French Revolution, see: Paul R. Hanson, *The Jacobin Republic Under Fire* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), pp.193-232.

[582] Tackett writes that "fear" was the default setting for contemporaries: "fear of invasion, fear of chaos and anarchy, fear of revenge," which was increasingly "characterized by a predominant fear of conspiracy": *The Coming of the Terror*, p.7; see: Sophia Rosenfeld, 'Thinking about Feeling, 1789-1799,' *French Historical Studies* 32 (4, Fall 2009), pp.697-706; David Andress, ed., *Experiencing the French Revolution* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2013); Lloyd F. Mason, 'The Psychology of the Terror,' *Social Science* 26 (2, April 1951), pp.110-16.

[583] Georges Danton, cited in François Bluche, 'La Terreur dans la Révolution Jacobine,' in Germain Sicard, ed., *Justice et Politique: La Terreur dans la Révolution Française* (Toulouse, Place Anatole France, 1997), pp.29-37, here: p.31: "Nous ne pouvons gouverner qu'en faisant peur."

[584] Wahnich, *In Defence of Terror*, p.65.

[585] David Andress, 'Living the Revolutionary Melodrama: Robespierre's Sensibility and the Construction of Political Commitment in the French Revolution,' *Representations* 114 (1, Spring 2011), pp.103-28; for discussions

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"The enemies abroad coalesce with the enemies at home; a Revolutionary Tribunal is established for more than fifteen days, yet not a single head of a conspirator has fallen beneath the blade of the law."[586] So read the petition of the section des Tuileries, presented before the Jacobin club in March 1793. Amongst many of the Parisian sections, popular impatience reflected a continuing displeasure with the slowness of revolutionary governance. Impatience was also one emanation of a *mentalité obsidionale*, a pathological preoccupation with encirclement, which, in the context of the autumn of 1792, heightened a commonplace concern that the Revolution was in a race against time – and losing.[587] With the external forces of counterrevolution lining along the frontiers of France, apparently in active communication with their internal counterparts, the levers of justice remained impassive.[588] As the section des Tuileries intimated, a fortnight was sufficient to create a choking sense of panic.

This perception of legal paralysis was a temporal problem. As Sanja Perovic has observed, the period that separated the fall of the monarchy on 10 August and the declaration of the Republic on 22 September formed a curious "lag-time" between the old regime and the new Republic.[589] During this forty-three day period, the Revolution – which so many observers believed had been historically accelerated by 10 August – seemed to belong to no-time. "I must tell you," wrote a concerned Adelaïde Mareux to her brother on 6 September 1792, "that since the *journée* of 10, only three people have been guillotined and that this has disgusted the people."[590] Referencing the *obsidionale* fear of encirclement, Mareux added: "We are being sold out on every side!" Even the barely functioning National Assembly

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of the metaphors of speed, in particular lightning, during the Terror, see: Marie-Hélène Huet, 'Thunder and Revolution: Franklin, Robespierre, Sade,' *The Eighteenth Century* 30: The French Revolution 1789-1989: two hundred years of rethinking (2, 1989), pp.13-32; Miller, *A Natural History of Revolution*, pp.72-103.

[586] Aulard, ed., *La Société des Jacobins*, V, p.108: "[L]es ennemis du dehors, coalisés avec les ennemis du dedans…un Tribunal révolutionnaire est créé depuis plus de quinze jours, et aucune tête de conspirateur n'est encore tombée sous le glaive de la loi."

[587] On this *mentalité obsidionale*, see: Sophie Wahnich, 'L'enjeu des émotions révolutionnaires, enjeu théorique ou enjeu thématique?' Paper delivered at the conference, 'From Enlightenment to Revolution: Rethinking the Debate,' Institut d'Études Avancées, Paris (11 March, 2016); Daniel Ligou, 'Sur la contre-révolution à Montauban,' in Jean Sentou, ed., *Révolution et Contre-Révolution dans la France du Midi, 1789-1799* (Toulouse, Presses Universitaires de Mirail, 1991), pp.91-106.

[588] As early as September 1789, French émigrés had established counterrevolutionary clubs in Turin and along the German border: David Andress, *The French Revolution and the People* (London, A & C Black, 2006), p.83; on early émigré activities, see: D. M. G. Sutherland, *France 1789-1815: Revolution and Counterrevolution* (Oxford, OUP, 1986), pp.47-8, 60-8; William Doyle, *Aristocracy and its Enemies in the Age of Revolution* (Oxford, OUP, 2009), pp.239-73; Simon Burrows, 'The émigrés and conspiracy in the French Revolution, 1789-99,' in Campbell et al, *Conspiracy in the French Revolution*, pp.150-71.

[589] Perovic, *The Calendar*, p.88.

[590] Louis de Launay, ed., *Une famille de la bourgeoisie parisienne pendant la Révolution; Toussaint Mareux, membre de la Commune de 1792…* (Paris, Perrin, 1921), p.308: "Il faut te faire un remarque que, depuis la journée du 10, il n'y a eu que trois personnes de guillotinées et que cela a révolté le peuple."

seemed complicit. The people had taken this matter into their own hands, observed *Le Thermomètre du jour* on 5 September, because conspiracy and legal incapacity had "arrested all the measures that the urgency of the moment demanded."[591] The massacres of 2-5 September, then, were not merely the acts of a mindless mob (even if they were accompanied by an unnerving degree of recreational butchery); they were an emanation of impatience with the ordinary speed of judicial procedure.[592]

This is perhaps why Danton, in declaring the necessity of an extraordinary tribunal on 10 March 1793, claimed that, in view of the dangers to "public safety," he could no longer see a "middle way between the ordinary forms and a revolutionary tribunal." Liège had just fallen to Prussian forces, the French had withdrawn from Maastricht, and Paris was, once again, in insurrectionary mood.[593] There was no time to spare, Danton told the Convention: "If, as soon as I had asked, you had developed the necessary forces, today the enemy would already be repelled far from your borders."[594] The Convention immediately decreed the establishment of an extraordinary criminal tribunal, later re-baptised "revolutionary."

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At first, the Revolutionary Tribunal went slowly. Trials often lasted days or weeks, defendants were permitted a legal counsel and were regularly found innocent and set free. In the six months from April to September 1793, the Tribunal issued 63 death sentences, 13 transportation orders and 38 acquittals.[595] The pressures of popular impatience hastened its operations. Until its suppression in May 1795, reform of the Revolutionary Tribunal primarily addressed its velocity. During the trial of the Girondins in October 1793, Fouquier-Tinville complained of "the slowness with which the instructive procedures of the tribunal progresses." "We are obstructed by the procedures prescribed by the law," he told the Convention: "For five days, the trial of [the Girondin] has been ongoing, and only nine witnesses have been heard. Each of them, in making their depositions, wish to recount the entire chronicle of the Revolution, the accused then respond to the witnesses, which is

[591] Pierre Caron, *Les Massacres de Septembre* (Paris, Rue Félibien, 1935).
[592] G. Lenotre, *The September Massacres: Accounts of Personal Experiences Written by Some of the Few Survivors of the Terrible days of September 2nd and 3rd, 1792…* (London, Hutchinson & Co., 1929); James Logan Godfrey, *Revolutionary Justice: A Study of the Organization, Personnel, and Procedure of the Paris Tribunal, 1793-1795* (Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1951); on the temporality of crowd violence during the September Massacres, see: Miller, *A Natural History of Revolution*, p.12.
[593] The best account of the panic this created remains Richard Cobb, 'The Revolutionary Mentality in France, 1793-1794,' *History* 52 (1957), pp.181-96; see, also: Bailey Stone, *Reinterpreting the French Revolution: A global-historical perspective* (Cambridge, CUP, 2002), pp.159-208.
[594] *AP*, 60, p.63: "Je ne vois pas de milieu entre les formes ordinaires et un tribunal révolutionnaire." "Si, dès le moment que je vous l'ai demandé, vous eussiez fait le développement de forces nécessaires, aujourd'hui l'ennemi serait déjà repoussé loin de vos frontières."
[595] AN AF/II/22; see: G. Lenotre, *The Tribunal of the Terror: A Study of Paris in 1793-1795* (London, William Heinemann, 1909), p.147.

replicated in turn."[596] Implicit in this complaint was the belief that the proceedings of the Tribunal and the relative completion of the Revolution were interdependent. The vague category of "counterrevolutionary" contained within the Law of Suspects, which had been passed on 17 September 1793, empowered the Convention to convict anyone who, "by their conduct, by their relations, by their conversations or by their writings, have shown themselves to be partisans of tyranny or federalism and enemies of liberty." The prison population consequently exploded, reaching approximately 7,043 by June 1794.[597]

Yet far from assuaging the perceived threat of counterrevolution, the Law of Suspects actually exacerbated the fear of conspiracy. As in September 1792, the prisons were once again thronged with "traitors," awaiting an invading army to set them loose upon a free people. Thus by merely collecting, but not deliberation upon the guilty, the Convention was merely "maintaining the race against time against the counterrevolution."[598] If the velocity of justice were, at any point, to decrease, the Revolution might be lost in an uncontrolled repeat performance of the September massacres: the legal mimesis of the sovereign will, which is how Robespierre characterised the activity of the Convention after the execution of the king, was structurally dependent upon speed. If it were to decelerate, the Tribunal would be overwhelmed by the growing back-log of counterrevolutionary suspects; it would be unable to accelerate the tempo of its judicial deliberation and of thus regulating the expression of popular vengeance. "It is up to the Convention to abolish all the formalities which obstruct our progress," concluded Fouquier-Tinville.[599]

After the Girondin trial, the Convention did indeed grant the public prosecutor the right to sequester proceedings by asking jurors if, after a period of three days, they felt sufficiently "enlightened" to issue a verdict. Soon even this concession seemed inadequate. "Instead of delaying the Revolution through a criminal slowness," Robespierre told the Jacobin club, "justice must be active like the crime itself, and all trials ought to be concluded within twenty-four hours." By quickening the proceedings of the Tribunal, the legal "delays" that seemed to be contributing to the "slowness" of the Revolution would be lifted. Legal time was to be accelerated so as to pre-empt extra-legal (counterrevolutionary) activity and

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[596] Croker, *Essays on the early period of the French Revolution*, p.456.
[597] *Journal de Paris national*, numéro 530 (26 prairial, l'an II; 14 juin, 1794), p.2140: "Le bulletin de la Police porte le nombre des prisonniers à 7043."
[598] Wahnich, *In Defence of The Terror*, p.67.
[599] Fouquier-Tinville, cited in Luc Willette, *Le tribunal révolutionnaire* (Paris, Denoël, 1981), p.36: "Les lenteurs avec lesquelles marchent les procédures instruites au tribunal criminel extraordinaire, nous forcent à vous présenter quelques réflexions. Nous sommes arrêtés par les formes que prescrit la loi. Depuis 5 jours, le procès des députés que vous avez accusés est commencé, et neuf témoins seulement ont été entendus. Chacun, en faisant sa déposition, veut faire l'historique de la Révolution, les accusés ensuite répondent aux témoins, qui répliquent à leur tour. […] C'est à la Convention de faire disparaître toutes les formalités qui entravent sa marche." See, also: Hector Fleischmann, *Les Coulisses du Tribunal Révolutionnaire: Fouquier-Tinville intime* (Paris, Société d'éditions et de publications Parisiennes, 1909); Henri Wallon, *Histoire du tribunal révolutionnaire de Paris: avec le journal de ses actes* (6 vols., Paris, Hachette, 1880-1882), IV, pp.143-44.

alleviate the temporal asymmetry that had long afflicted the Revolution. On 22 Prairial, Georges Couthon appeared before the Convention on behalf of the Committee of Public Safety, to announce a sweeping reform of the Tribunal. France might "clear away the absurd and fatal shackles which might arrest the progress of national justice." Urgency had reached an historical register, Couthon contended, since the "crimes of the conspirators directly threaten the very existence of society and our liberty."

> The life of criminals is placed in the balance with those of the people; here all affected slowness is culpable, all indulgent or superfluous formality is a public menace. The delay in punishing the enemies of the *patrie* must only take the time required to recognise them; this is less about punishment than annihilation.[600]

From its inauguration in April to the imposition of Terror "as the order of the day" in September 1793 – a six month period – approximately 114 individuals appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal. Between 22 Prairial and the collapse of the Jacobin Republic on 9 Thermidor – 47 days –1,703 appeared.[601] During the post-Prairial period, 43 separate *audiences* were held, each taking no more than five hours, which means that the average duration of an individual trial was eight minutes, although some were recorded as lasting no longer than five or six.[602] In fact, at the trial of Fouquier-Tinville in 1795, the "batches" of the accused were found to have often been "so considerable" that "the time of the *audience* was not sufficient to quiz [the accused] on their names, last names, ages, profession or addresses."[603]

The Revolutionary Tribunal was therefore charged with processing the entire historicity of the extant ancien regime. It became the legal forum for the accelerated judgement of centuries of corruption. The time pressures this exerted upon the court were phenomenal. After the passage of the Law of 22 Prairial, the rate at which new "conspirators" were discovered (or "unmasked," to use the revolutionary vernacular) outran the physical capacity of the Tribunal's clerks to transcribe new indictments.[604] This hurry is made material in the records and documentation of the Tribunal itself: eventually, the registers of the *audiences* were reduced to a simple list of dates, the hastily scrawled names of the accused,

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[600] *AP*, XCI, p.: "Les crimes des conspirateurs menacent directement l'existence de la société ou sa liberté, ce qui est la même chose. La vie des scélérats est mise en balance avec celle du peuple ; ici toute lenteur affectée est coupable, tout formalité indulgente ou superflue est un danger public. Le délai pour punir les ennemis de la patrie ne doit être que le temps de les reconnaître ; il s'agit moins de les punir que de les anéantir."
[601] Léo Domenget, *Fouquier-Tinville et le Tribunal révolutionnaire* (Paris, P. Dupont, 1878), p.290.
[602] Ibid.
[603] Joseph Cambon, *Pièces originales du procès de Fouquier-Tinville et de ses complices* (Paris, l'Imprimerie d'Hacquart, 1795), p.34: "si considérable, que le tems de l'audience n'avoit pas suffi pour les interroger sur leurs noms, prénoms, âges, professions et demeures…" For further of Foquier-Tinville's demands for legal levers to accelerate the dispensation of revolutionary justice, see the documents held at, AN, AF/II/22.
[604] Alphonse Dunoyer, *The Public Prosecutor of the Terror, Antoine Quentin Fouquier-Tinville* (trans. A.W. Evans), (London, Herbert Jenkins, 1914), pp.77-78.

pages upon pages left blank in the rush to despatch the guilty to the guillotine.[605] "The ministry is a world of paper," admitted Saint-Just, but prompt administration was "impossible with too many words," and when "the demon of writing makes war on us, government stops."[606] This expression of frustration with bureaucratic procedure was mirrored by the impatience that Fouquier-Tinville would display towards formal, written testimonies.

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"*The Guillotine, we find, gets always a quicker motion, as other things are quickening. The Guillotine, by its speed of going, will give index of the general velocity of the Republic. The clanking of its huge axe, rising and falling there, in horrid systole-diastole, is portion of the whole enormous Life-movement and pulsation of the Sansculottic System!*"

Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution* (1837)[607]

By the spring of 1794 the blade of the guillotine was falling with a tedious regularity. The machine was initially erected on the Place du Carrousel, outside the Tuileries, in late-August 1792; but as the Terror began, and the guillotine went into near-permanent operation, its location shifted constantly: shopkeepers along the rue Saint-Honoré understandly complained that the stench of blood streaming through the streets was bad for business.

Contemporary observations of the guillotine invariable made reference to its speed.[608] The blade fell "*avec la vitesse du regard*," remarked the physiologist, Pierre Cabanis; it despatched the guilty "in the blink of an eye," observed its inventor, Joseph-Ignace Guillotin. According to René-Georges Gastellier, the "plummeting acceleration" of the blade was akin "to the speed of lightning." "From the first point of contact to the last, there is no distance; it is an invisible point; the blade falls and the patient no longer exists." The moment of death almost seemed to pre-empt the actual visual reality of decapitation, just as the flash of lightning prefigured the ominous murmurs of a distant storm. "The rapidity," as one official from Falaise observed, "was like a lightning bolt which foreshadows thunder."[609]

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[605] Observe, for example, the holdings of the Archives nationales, W/540-545, which contain the increasingly inchoate registers of the Tribunal, and which illustrate how they became sparse in detail and hurried in assembly; on the pressures of paperwork and temporality, see: Ben Kafka, 'The Demon of Writing: Paperwork, Public Safety, and the Reign of Terror,' *Representations* 98 (1, Spring 2007), pp.1-24.
[606] Saint-Just, cited in David A. Bell, 'The Colbert Report,' in, *Shadows of Revolution: Reflections on France, Past and Present* (Oxford, OUP, 2016), pp.65-76, here: p.67.
[607] Thomas Carlyle, *The French Revolution* (3 vols., London, James Fraser, 1837), III. The Guillotine, p.268.
[608] Grégoire Chamayou, 'The Debate over Severed Heads: Doctors, the Guillotine and the Anatomy of Consciousness in the Wake of the Terror,' *Revue d'histoire des sciences* 61 (2, 2008), pp.333-365.
[609] Cabanis and Gastellier are cited in Daniel Arasse, *The Guillotine and the Terror* (trans. Christopher Miller), (London, Allen Lane, 1989), p.52, 36; Guillotin is cited in Croker, *Essays on the early period of the French Revolution*, p.525; the municipal administrator from Falaise is cited in Paul Friedland, *Seeing Justice Done: The Age of Spectacular Capital Punishment in France* (Oxford, OUP, 2012), p.248; as a means of executing nobility and peasantry alike, the machine provided civic equality before the law: it affected "the simple deprivation of life," observed Louis-Michel Lepeletier de Saint-Fargeau in his report on capital punishment, delivered before the

If, as the Convention acknowledged on 10 October 1793, following an intervention by Saint-Just, that "revolutionary laws must be executed rapidly," then the guillotine – "by its speed of going" – provided the most expeditious means of realising revolutionary justice. This valorisation of speed also meant that the machine offered a conceptual model for revolutionary governance itself. It was in this sense that Mme de Staël could later identify the political apparatus of the Committee of Public Safety and the political artefact of the guillotine as indissociable: "The government resembled the hideous instrument employed on the scaffold," she wrote, the "springs of which had been prepared for action by events."[610]

By 1794 the rate of decapitation had become an index of government efficacy in itself. "Heads fall like tiles," marvelled Fouquier-Tinville after the passage of the law of 22 Prairial, "but it must go faster still next *decade*; I must have four hundred and fifty at least."[611] Observers had begun measuring the progress of the Revolution according to a new unit of time: the head count. One police report, compiled in February 1794, claimed to have overheard impatient citizens demanding the execution of "fifty people a day…until there were no more conspirators." In "a revolutionary government," they murmured, parroting Saint-Just, "you have to act revolutionary."[612] This accorded neatly to the political vocabulary of virtue, in which the completion of the Revolution was coterminous with the final extirpation of civic corruption ("until there are no more conspirators"). Little wonder, then, that such a violent – and, ultimately, impossible – ambition was measured by the relative fullness of a basket of suppurating heads. "These infernal cannibals," recalled one pamphleteer in 1795, "counted the rapid hours of time according to the number of victims sacrificed [*immolées*] to their ferocity."[613] Descriptions of this sort, however, were not confined to the retroactive condemnations of the Thermidorian reaction; the head count that the guillotine provided offered a tangible means of measuring "the rapid hours of time" that demarcated a Terror-induced progression towards the terminus of the Revolution.[614] This made sense since the

National Assembly in May 1791, which is discussed in Friedland, *Seeing Justice Done*, p.233; the guillotine satisfied what Foucault later described as the conceptual shift from the punishment of crime as "an art of unbearable suffering" to an "economy of suspended rights": Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (trans. Alan Sheridan), (London, Vintage Books, 1977) p.11.

[610] Germaine de Staël, *Considerations on the principal events of the French Revolution* (1818), ed., Aurelian Craiutu (Indianapolis, IN., Liberty Fund, 2008), p.371.

[611] Thiers, *The History of the French Revolution*, III, p.421.

[612] Arasse, *The Guillotine*, p.36.

[613] AN, D/38/3: "Ces cannibales affamés comptaient les heures rapides du tems par le nombres des victimes immolées à leur acharnement."

[614] On post-Thermidor responses to the Terror, see: Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics after the Terror*, pp.1-13; Ronald Schechter, 'Gothic Thermidor: The Bals des victims, the Fantastic, and the Production of Historical Knowledge in Post-Terror France,' *Representations* 61 (Winter 1998), pp.78-94; Howard G. Brown, 'Echoes of the Terror,' *Historical Reflections/Réflexions Historiques* 29 (3, Fall 2003), pp.529-558; J.B. Sirich, 'The Revolutionary Committees after Thermidor,' *The Journal of Modern History* 26 (4, December 1954), pp.329-339; James M. Donovan, *Juries and the Transformation of Criminal Justice in France in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2010), pp.23-48.

temporal thickening caused by the historically compressed experience of the Revolution had, to some extent, rendered pre-existing units of time meaningless.

The guillotine may therefore be imagined as an alternative timepiece: in the context of the Terror, it offered a more material means of measuring the "progress" of the Revolution relative to its ambitions, namely the inculcation of virtue and the eradication of "past habits." Essential to this vision of civic purification was the speed with which the basket could be filled. On 31 October, 1793, the *prestesse* of the guillotine reached a salutary velocity as the twenty one Girondin "conspirators" were read their collective sentence, despatched to the scaffold and individually decapitated – all in the space of thirty-eight minutes.[615]

Despite robbing the public execution of its spectacle, the velocity of the guillotine nevertheless satisfied the exigencies of popular impatience. According to Condorcet, Guillotin had "given his name to an instrument of death which served the impatience that enabled the Convention to kill off a huge numbers of the innocent in but a few moments [*en peu d'instans*]."[616] A process that had previously unfolded over the course of hours was reduced to an almost invisible moment. The timescale of ancien regime punishment acted as a ceremonial for the spectacular, transhistorical authority of the crown. Revolutionary justice, by contrast, had to be "prompt," and to operate with "swiftness," because the Republic was confronted by an irruptive, non-linear schedule of historical events. Unforeseen events could – at any moment – destroy the Revolution; and, as long as the Revolution proceeded, external and internal threats would remain imminent and omnipresent, multiplying and hardening at a bewildering rate. As one anonymous placard, pinned on the walls of the rue Mouffetard and rue Saint-Médard in August 1793, declared: "It is necessary that the guillotine be permanent," that "agitators," "intriguers," and "conspirators" be "judged instantly," for "as long as these villains exist, the Republic will be in danger and the blood of patriots will not cease to gush." Public safety could not be ensured "if we do not exterminate *without delay* all the conspirators who wish to destroy us and to make us slaves again by toppling the Republic and restoring the monarchy."[617] Once again, it was not guilt or innocence that mattered, but sheer numbers: herein lay the Jacobin measurement of revolutionary progress.[618]

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[615] Hector Fleischmann, *La Guillotine en 1793* (Paris, Librarie des publications modernes, 1908), p.63.
[616] Condorcet, *Mémoires de Condorcet, sur la Révolution Française, extraits de sa correspondance et de celles de ses amis* (2 vols., Paris, Ponthieu Libraire, 1824), II, p.292.
[617] Albert Mathiez, 'La Révolution et les Subsistances. L'agitation sectionnaire à Paris en août 1793. L'affaire Cauchois,' *Annales révolutionnaires* XIV (1, Janvier–Février, 1922), pp.27-54, here: p.41, 40: "il faut que la guillotine soit permanente," "soient jugés sur-le-champ," "tant que ces scélérats existeront, la république sera en danger et le sang des patriotes ne cessera de couler." "si nous n'exterminons *sans délai* tous les conspirateurs qui veulent nous détruire ou nous faire redevenir esclaves an anéantissant la République et en rétablissant la monarchie."
[618] In order to satisfy the "impatience of the *patrie*," and "the sovereign people who compose it," wrote Collot d'Herbois in a letter to Robespierre in November 1793, it would be necessary "to forge thunder." Yet dispatching "twenty guilty individuals" every day – the rate of attrition that d'Herbois oversaw in Lyon where, following the purge of the Girondins, the spectre of federalism threatened to collapse the Republic – was "still too slow for the justice of an entire people who must *blast their enemies at once*." Collot d'Herbois to Maximilien Robespierre (3

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During the Terror, the credentials of the virtuous citizens were in a constant state of flux.[619] It was not merely that personal political virtue had to be ceaselessly and publicly performed, but the nature of that public performance was also subject to ceaseless change.[620] At his trial in 1795, Fouquier-Tinville would lament that, "what was virtuous a year and six months ago, is today an unpardonable crime."[621] In December 1793, Collot d'Herbois, recently returned from butchering recalcitrant revolutionaries in Lyon, admonished his fellow members of the Jacobin club for their growing indulgence of civic corruption: "Two months ago when I left you, you were burning with the thirst for vengeance against the infamous conspirators of the city of Lyon. Today, I hardly recognise public opinion; if I had arrived two days later I would perhaps have been put under indictment myself!"[622] Thus the temporality of virtue in a time of Terror seemed to shift constantly, in turn saturating the experience of the revolutionary present with an overwhelming sense of both personal and political uncertainty.[623] In the spring of 1794, Pierre Campmas, a Jacobin deputy to the Convention, received a letter from a constituent asking him for a favour. Campmas immediately declined, responding incredulously that, if he were to agree, "within twenty-four hours I would perhaps no longer exist." Appearing to publicly assist someone on the basis of private friendship could provoke immediate suspicion, sudden arrest, instant condemnation, a perfunctory trial (followed by perhaps an hour in prison), and then a fast-tracked rendezvous with the guillotine.[624] The vicissitudes of republican virtue during the Terror deranged even the most basic measurement

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Frimaire, 1793), cited in Montléon, *Mémoires de M. l'abbé Guillon de Montléon*, p.405: "L'impatience de la patrie et du peuple souverain qui la compose, retentit sur toutes mes fibres et dans mon cœur. Plusieurs fois vingt coupables ont subi la peine due à leurs forfait le même jour : cela est encore lent pour la justice d'un peuple entier qui doit *foudroyer ses ennemis à la fois* ; et nous nous occupons à *forger la foudre*." On French federalism, see: Malcolm Crook, 'Federalism and the French Revolution: the Revolt of Toulon in 1793,' *History* 65 (1980), pp.383-397.

[619] In such "stringent times," observed Adrien Lezay-Marnézia, "everything that recalled the ancien regime was an almost certain route to the scaffold": Adrien Lezay-Marnézia, *Des causes de la Révolution et de ses résultats* (Paris, Desenne, 1797), p.45: "Dans ces temps rigoureux, où tout ce qui rappeloit l'ancien régime étoit un titre presque certain à l'échafaud…"

[620] Conforming to the archetype of the virtuous citizen was a means of legitimizing public self-expression, even if the meaning of that virtue was subject to such delicate change: Linton, in *Choosing Terror*, demonstrates how even what restaurant or café politicians dined at could determine their fate with public approval, pp.223; see: Rebecca Spang, *The Invention of the Restaurant: Paris and Modern Gastronomic Culture* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2001).

[621] Georges Lecocq, *Notes et documents sur Fouquier-Tinville* (Paris, Libraire des bibliophiles, 1885), p.32: "Ce qui était vertu il y a six mois et un an, est aujourd'hui crime irrémissible."

[622] Schama, *Citizens*, p.688.

[623] It was also conceived as the means of inculcating virtue: "*La guillotine*," crowed the *conventionnel* François Buzot, "is today the great spring of the French government. The people are suddenly republican thanks to the guillotine: C. A. Dauban, ed., *Mémoires inédits de Pétion et mémoires de Buzot et de Barbaroux, accompangés de notes inédites de Buzot…* (Paris, Henri Plon, 1866), p.33: "La guillotine…c'est aujourd'hui le grand ressort du gouvernement français. Ce peuple est républicain à coup de guillotine."

[624] The essential work on friendship and virtue is Linton, *Choosing Terror*, esp. ch.9.

of human time – the distance separating life and death – to the point of blurred uncertainty. "None of us can be certain of avoiding [death]," remarked Ruault, "since it strikes anywhere and everywhere."[625]

Far from regularising the temporal life of the Republic, then, the Terror – and, in particular, the Law of Suspects and the Law of 22 prairial – reinforced the radical unpredictability of future events. "I spoke at that time to a few *conventionnels* friends about their personal anticipations [*calcul personnel*], which encompassed the future of a month," recalled the memoirist Marc-Antoine Baudot: "They greatly mocked me for my presumption of counting upon a single month of life in these stormy times."[626] The belief that the *patrie* was in danger, that the life of the Republic itself existed under constant, imminent threat, was transformed into a personal, daily reality for both citizen and *conventionnel* by the institutions and instruments of the Terror.

Without recourse to tradition or custom – the historical coordinates provided by ancien regime society – the French Republic developed a regime of legitimation that was simultaneously dependant upon, and threatened by, the regularisation of time. "It was undoubtedly here," writes Wahnich, "that the project became impossible." Devising and maintaining a process of justice with "a form that was at the same time controlled – and to do so at lightning speed," made the efficacy of the Terror dependent upon a perceived judicial acceleration.[627] There is a simultaneous note of panic, however, in the public pronouncements and private writings of the terrorists; a fear that the Revolution was in danger of becoming interminable, that the speed of revolutionary progress would never reach critical velocity. Amidst the myriad documents discovered at Robespierre's lodgings following his execution in June 1794, there is a single scrap of paper that encapsulates this panic.[628] Across a meandering and occasionally incoherent series of questions, Robespierre attempts to construct a chronology for the completion of the Revolution, and attempts to identify the "obstacles" that might be responsible for prolonging its duration. "What is the aim of the Revolution?," he asks. "The execution of the constitution in favour of the people," comes the response. He continues:

> Who will be our enemies? The vicious and the wealthy. What means will they employ? Calumny and hypocrisy. What factors could promote the use of these

[625] Pierre Campmas and Nicolas Ruault are both cited in Tackett, *The Coming of the Terror*, p.334.
[626] Marc-Antoine Baudot, *Notes historiques sur la Convention nationale, le Directoire, l'Empire et l'exil des votants* (Paris, Megariotis, 1893), p.260: "Je parlais dans ce temps à quelques conventionnels de mes amis d'un calcul personnel qui embrassait l'avenir d'un mois. Ils se moquèrent beaucoup de ma présomption de compter sur un mois de vie dans ces temps orageux."
[627] Wahnich, *In Defence of the Terror*, p.67.
[628] On the wave of recent biographies of Robespierre, see, in particular: Jean-Clément Martin, *Robespierre: le fabrication d'un monstre* (Paris, Perrin, 2016); Ruth Scurr, *Fatal Purity: Robespierre and the French Revolution* (London, Vintage, 2007); Peter McPhee, *Robespierre: A Revolutionary Life* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 2012).

> means? The ignorance of the sans-culottes. […] The people… what other obstacle is there to the instruction of the people? Poverty. When will the people thus be enlightened? When they will have bread, when the wealthy and the government cease to bribe journalists in order to deceive them; when their interest will be aligned with those of the people."

And when would these objectives be achieved, Robespierre finally asked himself. The answer was simple: "NEVER."[629] They would *never* be achieved.

It is this potential non-finality of the Revolution that renders the Terror truly grotesque. If the state orchestrated violence of 1793 and 1794 was not directing the Revolution to term – indeed, if the endpoint of the Revolution was actually unreachable – then the acceleration of judicial executions possessed no other function that to intensify the torment of historical experience. Robespierre had come to realise (although it is unclear at what point, since his jottings remain undated) the political horror implicit in the conceptualisation of revolution as "ongoing act."[630] In this sense, Terror is not constitutive of historical progress since it cannot coordinate itself in relation to a realisable future; it is simply the ceaseless iteration of a flawed project. Yet still the terrorists pressed the accelerator: and as the velocity of the Terror increased, so its capacity to regulate revolutionary time dwindled, which, in turn, provoked further calls for an even greater political velocity. As Saint-Just insouciantly observed, a mere four months before his own execution, it was far "better to hasten the progress of the Revolution than to follow it."[631]

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[629] *Papier inédits trouvés Chez Robespierre, Saint-Just, Payan, etc., supprimés ou omis par Courtois; précédés du rapport de ce député à la Convention nationale…* (3 vols., Paris, Baudouin frères, 1828), II, pp.13-14: "Quel est le but? L'exécution de la constitution en faveur du peuple. Quels seront nos ennemis? Les hommes vicieux et les riches. Quels moyens emploieront-ils? La calomnie et l'hypocrisie. Quelles causes peuvent favoriser l'emploi de ces moyens. L'ignorance des sans-culottes. […] Le peuple… quel autre obstacle y a-t-il à l'instruction du peuple? La misère. Quand le peuple sera-t-il donc éclairé? Quand il aura du pain, et que les riches et le gouvernement cesseront de soudoyer des plumes pour le tromper; lorsque leur intérêt sera confondu avec celui du peuple. Quand leur intérêt sera-t-il confondu avec celui du peuple? JAMAIS."

[630] Baker, 'Revolutionizing Revolution,' in Baker and Edelstein, eds., *Scripting Revolution*, pp.71-102.

[631] Antoine-Louis Saint-Just, *Œuvres de Saint-Just, représentant du peuple à la Convention nationale* (Paris, Prévot, 1834), p.217: "Il vaut mieux hâter la marche de la Révolution que de la suivre." On Saint-Just's callow, immature attitude to life and death, see: Bernard Vinot, *Saint-Just* (Paris, Fayard, 1985), ch.21; Mona Ozouf, 'The Terror after the Terror: An Immediate History', in Baker, *Political Culture*, IV, pp.3-18, here: p.15; see also: Benjamin Constant, 'Des effets de la Terreur,' in *De la force du government actuel et de la nécessité de s'y rallier* (1797), (Philippe Raynaud, ed., Paris, Flammarion, 1988), pp.27-89; and Germaine de Staël, *Des Circonstance Actuelles qui peuvent Terminer la Révolution et des Principes qui peuvent Fonder la République en France* (1798), (Lucia Omacini, ed., Geneva, Droz, 1979), who characterised the slide into Terror as a consequence of the French Revolution having been "thrown off balance by its rush toward the future, not the weight of the past"; in reality, the two were indistinguishable: it was the perceived "weight of the past," the drag-force it seemed to exert upon revolutionary completion, that created the conditions for an ever-accelerated "rush toward the future," p.2: "L'avenir n'a point de précurseur. Le guide de la vraisemblance, de la probabilité n'existe plus. L'homme erre dans la vie comme un être lancé dans un élément étranger. Ses habitudes, ses sentiments, ses espérances, tout est confondu." See: Biancamaria Fontana, 'The Thermidorian republic and its principles,' in Biancamaria Fontana, ed., *The Invention of the Modern Republic* (Cambridge, CUP, 1994), pp.118-138.

The single speed setting of administrative acceleration proved unsustainably self-destructive. In an attempt to institutionalise – to canalise and control – the extreme tempo of constituent power, the terrorist state had undertaken a form of temporal mimesis, an institutional impersonation of popular impatience, which ultimately proved paradoxical.[632] It was impossible to reconcile (legitimate) popular spontaneity with the (illegitimate) duration of durable governance. In America, meanwhile, the revolutionary disjuncture of past, present and future, liquefied historical experience, sending the possibility of political control "sliding" over a temporal plane that was constantly disrupted by the multiplication of potential futures. In this context, it was difficult to identify the Confederation with any verifiable historical trajectory because it was impossible gain traction, to impose order, on events for any sufficient length of time. This was not so much a problem of tempo; circumstances saturated by contingencies produced a form of historical experience possessed of variable – and unpredictable – velocities. As the Confederation staggered on, the Jacobin Republic disintegrated, consumed by yet another popular *journée*.[633] The American and French Republics now entered comparable regimes of contingency, in which the exercise of political power was frustrated by the sense of a continual historical happening.

[632] Lucien Jaume, 'Constituent Power in France: The Revolution and Its Consequences,' and Stephen Griffin, 'Constituent Power and Constitutional Change in American Constitutionalism,' in Martin Loughlin, Neil Walker, eds., *The Paradox of Constitutionalism: Constituent Power and Constitutional Form* (Oxford, OUP, 2007), pp.67-85, 49-66.
[633] Colin Jones, 'The Overthrow of Maximilien Robespierre and the "Indifference" of the People,' *American Historical Review* 119 (3, 2014), pp.689-713; Jones is also working at present on a micro-history of 9 Thermidor, a history of a single *journée*, provisionally entitled: *Thermidor: 24 Hours of Parisian Revolution* (forthcoming).

4: Postrevolutionary Power and Reordering Historical Time at the Constitutional Convention, 1785-1787, and the Coup of Brumaire, 1795-1799

The search for simultaneity can sometimes occlude the presence of similarity. Hunting for historical meaning in directly contemporary events often obscures comparable processes: the emergence of George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte as the inheritors of their respective revolutions is a case in point. Thus Chateaubriand – who could claim to have met both – wrote:

> 18 Brumaire was accomplished; the consular government is born, and liberty dies. An absolute change is thus operated in the world: the man of the last century exits the stage, the man of this century enters it. Washington, following all his wonders, cedes to Bonaparte, who begins his own.[634]

This trans-Atlantic baton-pass from liberty to autocracy was couched in familiar terms: both had "emerged from the womb of democracy," both were "born to liberty," yet whilst "the former remained faithful to her," the latter "betrayed her." This is misleading. Parallels should not be drawn from the simultaneous occurrences of 1799, but from the similar processes of 1799 and 1787: between Brumaire and the Constitutional Convention. The regimes that Washington and Napoleon helped overthrow – the Articles of Confederation and the Directory – were hostages to historical time. Unable to pre-empt future "exigencies," they constantly confronted present contingencies. They were afflicted by a ceaseless sense of historical happening, by an inability to coordinate themselves in historical time: it was the historicity of these regimes that undermined their capacity for governance.[635] This was also the justification for their dissolution.

For the Brumairian conspirators and for nascent Federalists, resuscitating the functionality of political power demanded strategies for controlling the experience of historical time. The Confederation and Directory were to be replaced with new institutions

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[634] François-René, vicomte de Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe* (4 vols., Paris, Classiques Garnier, 1992) II, livre 19, p.358: "[L]e 18 brumaire s'accomplit; le gouvernement consulaire naît, et la liberté meurt. Alors s'opère dans le monde un changement absolu: l'homme du dernier siècle descend de la scène, l'homme du nouveau siècle y monte. Washington, au bout de ses prodiges, cède la place à Bonaparte, qui recommence les siens." In *Mémoires*, Chateaubriand said he met Washington during his travels through America, in Philadelphia in 1791, possibly between 5 September and 26 November, although the marquis de la Rouerie claims this meeting never took place: Chateaubriand, *Chateaubriand's Travels in America* (trans. Richard Switzer), (Lexington, KY., University of Kentucky, 1969), p.211-12, footnote 20; Chateaubriand met with Napoleon for the first time in 1802: Roger Pearson, *Unacknowledged Legislators: The Poet as Lawgiver in Post-Revolutionary France* (Oxford, OUP, 2016), p.135; Anne-Sophie Morel, *Chateaubriand et la violence de l'histoire dans les Mémoires d'outre-tombe* (Paris, Honoré Champion, 2014).

[635] Unlike François Hartog, who examines shifts in "regimes of historicity," I am more interested by the historicity of regimes, by the ways in which historical experiences are repurposed as a means of sustaining – and, ultimately, of legitimising – the operations of political power: see, François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time* (trans. Saskia Brown), (New York, NY., Columbia University Press, 2003; reprint 2015), see esp., pp.15-20; here: p.xv.

and practices of power that might incubate political experience, investing political culture with a new sense of duration and imbuing political authority with a new sense of durability. This was different to simply recreating the continuity common to ancien regime society, which had been delegitimised as a modality of power on account of its apparent incompatibility with the exercise of liberty. Rather than simply forestalling the onset of the future through a ceaseless reification of tradition, the perpetrators of the Constitutional Convention and Brumaire aimed at the invention of political regimes that would create their own futures, thereby imposing order upon – rather than being continually reordered by – the "exterior time" of contingency.[636]

I. Anxiety and Contingency: the lived experience of the present during the Confederation and Directory

The United States under the Articles of Confederation (1781-1787) and France under the Directory (1794-1799) were both periods of anxiety.[637] These nascent republics appeared ungovernable, as the prey to the unmanageable chaos of revolutionary historical experience. Human agency seemed nugatory, even moribund. Contingency ruled. "There are no longer men in France," lamented the one-time *conventionnel* and soon-to-be Napoleonic *conseiller*, Antoine-Clair Thibaudeau, "there are only events."[638] In August 1786, the Massachusetts lawyer Theodore Sedgwick expressed similar despondency at the directionless drift of the United States. "If we do not control events, we shall be miserably controlled by them." This

[636] Pocock, 'Modes of political and historical time,' p.92; it is the tension that exists between the "horizon" of future events and the "space" of present experience that generates historical time, and plunges political regimes into contingency, confronting them with an "exterior time" not governed by tradition; see: Michael Pickering, 'Experience as horizon: Koselleck, expectation and historical time,' *Cultural Studies* 18 (2, 2004), pp.271-89; the very concept of "experience" was seen to degrade during this period, as Goethe observed in *Elective Affinities* (1809): "[I]t is terrible that one cannot learn anything for life anymore… Our ancestors held firm to what they had learned in their youth; but we have to learn everything over again every five years if we are not to be totally behind the times": cited in Rosa, *Social Acceleration* (2013), p.108.

[637] The classic thesis that portrays "the five years following the peace of 1783 was the most critical moment in all the history of the American people," is found in John Fiske, *The Critical Period of American History, 1783-1789* (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1888), see: p.55, where Fiske adds that, "the dangers from which we were saved in 1788 were even greater than the dangers from which we were saved in 1865." Gordon S. Wood, in *The Creation of the American Republic*, has observed how often contemporary references to "critical" circumstances or "crises" were framed in temporal terms, often to convey the imminent nature of the threat, see: pp.393-4; and Merrill Jensen, *The New Nation: A History of the United States during the Confederation, 1781-1789* (New York, NY., Knopf, 1950); the various crises that engulfed the Directory are detailed in Denis Woronoff, *The Thermidorean Regime and the Directory, 1794-1799* (trans. Julian Jackson), (Cambridge, CUP, 1984); Martyn Lyons, 'Recent Interpretations of the French Directory,' *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 27 (1981), pp.40-47; see, also, Françoise Brunel, *Thermidor: La chute de Robespierre* (Paris, Éditions Complexe, 1989), p.120-27.

[638] Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Old Regime and the Revolution* (trans. Alan S. Kahan), (2 vols., Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press), II, p.213.

crisis was both institutional and temporal in origin: "Even the appearance of a union," wailed Sedgwick, "cannot in the way we are long be preserved."[639]

The Confederation and the Directory were ineffective time-shaping agencies. Whilst they were able to manipulate and perpetuate "simple domains of contingency," ensuring only their near-term existence, barely surviving the onslaught of unforeseeable "events," they proved incapable of charting verifiable historical vectors.[640] These regimes were unable, in other words, of creating their own time or shaping their own history; they could not guarantee their own future continuation. They were consequently afflicted by the constant fluctuation in the transhistorical relationship between past, present and future, which resulted in a further inability to foreclose the multiple potential futures that seemed – on an almost daily basis – to confront the American and French Republics with imminent disintegration. Fidgety and fissiparous, the lived experience of the present appeared both interminable – as an unending stream of the unforeseen – and liable to sudden disintegration – as the always-at-hand potential collapse of the state. Contemporaries were consequently racked by a prevalent sensation of anxiety, a future-oriented fear derived from the temporalisation of crisis.[641]

The Revolutions had transformed the present into a ceaseless historical 'happening.' In 1782, the French envoy to the United States, the marquis de Barbé-Marbois, depicted the political life of the nascent Republic as "*ce tableau continuellement mobile*."[642] The constancy of uncertainty would later provoke the ardent federalist, Fisher Ames, to liken the Confederation to a period when "the corn would not grow, nor the pot boil," as an ongoing state of anxious anticipation, mercifully terminated by the promulgation of a federal

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[639] Theodore Sedgwick to Caleb Strong (6 August 1786), in Smith, ed., *Letters of Delegates to Congress*, XXIII, p.436: Sedgwick was referring, in particular, to the continued attachment of the eastern and southern states, whose "interests" – political and commercial – seemed to be drifting apart, "They can give us nothing as an equivalent for the protection which they derive from us but a participation in their commerce." This is relevant to chapter 5, in which the geographic scope of the United States and the division of "interests" created a rift in perceptions of historical time. In 1787, just weeks before the convocation of the Constitutional Convention, Rufus King openly lamented "the deranged condition of the Confederacy," in Charles R. King, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, Comprising his Letters, Private and Official, his Public Documents and his Speeches* (2 vols., New York, GP Putnam's Sons, 1897), I, p.135.

[640] For Pocock, the creation of "public time" is defined as the capacity to "perpetuate simple continuities, to perpetuate simple domains of contingency, or to create new futures." In combination, the political system may be durable, but without the final time-creating capacity – that of manufacturing "new futures" – "public time" will inevitably be liable to contingency induced ruptures in historical continuity; see: 'Modes of political and historical time,' p.93.

[641] The conceptual interplay of time and crisis is neatly addressed in Myriam Revault d'Allonnes, *La Crise sans fin. Essai sur l'expérience moderne du temps* (Paris, Seuil, 2012); although the concept has often been assessed in the context of the pre-revolutionary crisis, thanks in large part to Rousseau's claim, in *Emile* (1762), (trans. Christopher Kelly and Allan Bloom), (Hanover, NH., University Press of New England, 2010), p.343, that Europe was "fast approaching a state of crisis and the age of revolutions," its effects have seldom been analysed within ongoing revolutionary events; revolutionary "anxiety" is briefly discussed by Peter McPhee, *Living the French Revolution, 1789-1799* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), pp.35-54; there are similarly intriguing allusion to the experience of anxiety in Justine S. Murison, *The Politics of Anxiety in Nineteenth-Century American Literature* (Cambridge, CUP, 2011), pp.1-16.

[642] François Barbé-Marbois to Vergennes (21 March, 1782), cited in Charles R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy toward the United States, 1783-1795* (Dallas, TX., Southern Methodist University Press, 1969), p.33.

Constitution, but a crisis that would surely resume "if [the Union] should be broken."[643] Under the Directory, meanwhile, the realities of daily life seemed to shift on an almost hourly basis. The effects of inflation and financial speculation, which had so rapidly depreciated the value of paper currency in the United States, had also sent the assignat into free-fall. At the end of Brumaire 1795, for example, the *louis* was valued at an estimated 2,000 livres; by early Frimaire (less than one month later), it was worth 5,500 livres.[644] The "distressing circumstances only worsen with time," observed one police report in July 1795: "the collapse of the assignats becomes faster and faster; the scandalous price inflation of all commodities makes, from hour to hour, such a terrifying progress that most citizens are forced into last expedients just in order to assure their daily needs."[645] This endangered the survival of the state since its functionality had come to depend upon the speed with which the increasingly worthless paper money could be printed. When, in May 1795, the workmen who operated the printing presses threatened to stage a strike, the Directory was confronted with imminent collapse (an outcome that was only averted when the government agreed to pay the printers in loaves of bread rather than bundles of cash). Despite gradual monetary reform, *Le Moniteur* was, as late as October 1797, still carrying "tables of depreciation" which enabled readers to calculate the daily decline in the value of their currency.[646]

This continual sense of upheaval made the identification of historical meaning or causation impossible. As the conclusion of the American War and the Thermidorian Reaction had both subverted the future-oriented temporal horizons of their Revolutions, they plunged their respective Republics into a realm of contingent, vicissitudinal time. The present consequently became a zone of apparently endless historical accumulation; a space of experience in which experience itself was relentlessly rendered useless. Nothing could be foreseen and nothing could be planned for: "One does not know what will happen next," observed one fretful Parisian diarist in 1796, "and can see no end to any of this."[647] "Bad news arrives every morning in the post," lamented Ruault; yet the Directory, unable to govern for anything other than the exigencies of the present, resembled a group of men "groping

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[643] Fisher Ames to George Richards Minot (23 July, 1789), in Seth Ames, ed., *Works of Fisher Ames* (2 vols., Boston, MA., Little, Brown & Co., 1854), I, p.66; see: John W. Malsberger, 'The Political Thought of Fisher Ames,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (1, 1982), pp.1-20.
[644] Woronoff, *The Thermidorean Regime*, p.92; S. E. Harris, *The Assignats* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1930), p.53.
[645] 'Rapport du 29 messidor, an III' (16 July 1795), in Alphonse Aulard, *Paris pendant la reaction thermidorienne et sous le Directoire, recueil de documents pour l'histoire de l'esprit public à Paris* (5 vols., Paris, 1898-1902), II, p.86: "les circonstances pénibles du temps ne varient que pour s'aggraver. […] la chute des assignats devient de plus en plus rapide; la cherté scandaleuse de toutes choses fait d'heure en heure des progrès si effrayants que la plupart des citoyens sont réduits aux derniers expédients pour assurer leur subsistances journalière." For similar reflections, see: 'Rapport du bureau central du 25 pluviose, an IV' (13 February 1795), ibid, p.767.
[646] Judith A. Miller, 'The Aftermath of the Assignat: Plaintiffs in the Age of Property, 1794-1804,' in Howard G. Brown, Judith A. Miller, *Taking Liberties: Problems of a New Order from the French Revolution to Napoleon* (Manchester, Palgrave, 2002), pp.70-91; Andrew Dickson White, *Fiat Money Inflation in France: How it Came, What it Brought, and How it Ended* (New York, NY., Appleton, 1876), pp.50-51.
[647] Cited in Spang, *Stuff and Money*, p.210.

around, as if in a cellar, with the light only shining from behind them."[648] They were incapable of governing for *future* potentialities since the temporality of the Republic remained dominated by the ceaseless appearance of unforeseen events. This, as Ruault's metaphor indicates, left the directors with nothing more than the searchlight of past experiences, whose beams – "only shining from behind them" – failed to illuminate the path ahead, trapping them in a present-centred posture of constant anxiety. The reason the "political atmosphere" of the present "torments us," wailed the *Courrier français* in July 1795, was that it seemed to "presage for us some distressing future."[649]

Living in a present saturated with contingency robbed individuals of their capacity to coordinate themselves historically. In his *Almanach des gens de biens* of 1797, the royalist pamphleteer Galarat de Montjoie forlornly wondered whether "these storms," which buffeted the Republic and which had been "amassing for so long over our heads," might ever dissipate:

> When will the fortuitous moment come when we will no longer have to bemoan the past, where we may enjoy the present, and no longer fear the future?[650]

When, in other words, would history once again make sense? The radical dissimilarity between past and future, and the constant, politically-charged revision of these experiential spheres, invested the lived experience of the present with a kind of rumbling historicity – a limitlessly fluctuating series of possible futures derived from a repeatedly revised medley of multiple pasts.[651] The present was simply too chaotic to be comprehended, much less "enjoyed."

Anxiety bred exhaustion. Such "demanding circumstances," read one report of the bureau central in February 1796, "agitate the public mind." The citizens of Paris seemed "tired of the present and worried by the future," and consequently engaged "in thousands of vague conjectures, for which the result is always grievous."[652] In the context of a contingent

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[648] Ruault, *Gazette d'un Parisien*, p.393-4: "le mal arrive tous les matins en poste," "[les directeurs] marchent à tâtons, comme dans une cave, et n'ont de lumière que derrière eux."
[649] *Courrier français* (21 messidor, an III), (July 1795), in Aulard, *Paris pendant la reaction thermidorienne*, p.66.
[650] Galarat de Montjoie, *Almanach des gens de bien pour l'année 1797: contenant des anecdotes peu connues pour servir à l'histoire des événemens de ces derniers tems…* (Paris, chez Picard, rue de Thionville, 1797), p.9: "…dissipera ces orages amassés depuis si long-temps sur nos têtes? Quand arrivera le moment fortuné où nous n'aurons plus qu'à gémir du passé, où nous pourrons jouir du présent, et ne plus redouter l'avenir?" On the opinions of the royalist press during the Directory, see: Jeremy D. Popkin, *The Right-Wing Press in France, 1792-1800* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 1980), and James L. Osen, *Royalist Political Thought During the French Revolution* (Westport, CN., Greenwood Press, 1995), pp.111-30.
[651] Whilst the complexion of future events would remain a source of disquiet throughout the Directory, in the immediate aftermath of 9 Thermidor not even the recent past could be verifiably recalled. Individuals who had once exulted in Terror, now seemed entirely transformed. Before 9 Thermidor, Guffroy – or *citoyen Échafaud* as he was known by his fellow *conventionnels* – had paraded his role in the accusation and execution of Marie-Antoinette; after 9 Thermidor, Guffroy penned a series of pamphlets expressing horror at the "great waves of blood" that were made to wash over France "every day": Guffroy, *Les grandes prouesses des Jacobins, ou Réponse au libelle intitulé, les Jacobins traités comme ils le méritent* (Paris, l'imprimerie de Guffroy, 1794), p.5.
[652] 'Rapport du bureau central du 24 pluviose, an IV' (12 February 1796), in Aulard, *Paris pendant la reaction thermidorienne*, p.763: "ils [les observateurs de tous les entretiens publics] nous disent encore que les

and historically disjointed present, the collapse of society into anarchy represented a constantly imminent danger. It was not merely the case, as Pocock argues, that the Republics of France and America, tasked with "remaining morally and politically stable in a stream of irrational events conceived as essentially destructive of all systems of secular stability," were forced to confront their own "temporal finitude." Rather, as a consequence of revolution, "finitude" itself underwent temporalisation.[653] The futile art of predicting this supposedly imminent disintegration undergirded contemporary anxieties – anxiety, indeed, became a temporalized psychological category, a means of giving expression to an erratic experience of history. By 1783, the citizens of the new United States had also seen their political energies stripped bear: "Seven years of war have entirely extinguished them," observed Barbé-Marbois.[654] Political exhaustion was one expression of a widespread sense that the Confederation, like the Directory, was constantly ripe for collapse. In a petition delivered by the residents of Granby, Massachusetts, to General Lincoln, who, in early 1787, was directing a state militia against Shays' rebels, the destruction of the state – and potentially the Union – was projected at a distance of days, even hours. "*Sir*, the alarming prospect which now presents itself to us" – and which had obliged the townsfolk to render an account "of the present distressing complexion of the times" – was "of our being *daily or hourly* involved in all the horrors of a civil war."[655] Joseph Hawley, in a letter to Caleb Strong, was stunned by the speed with which events were moving: "You would be astonished to know with what amazing rapidity the spirit of the insurgents propagates. Many are infected with it of whom you would never have the least suspicion."[656] In "this hour of their Confusion and distress," observed the British consul, Sir John Temple, in a despatch from Boston, events clearly portended the dissolution of the United States.[657]

Whilst historians have generally agreed that Shays' Rebellion – an armed uprising in Massachusetts, led by the disaffected Revolutionary War veteran, Daniel Shays, in the winter of 1786 and spring of 1787 – influenced the convocation of the Constitutional Convention, the precise nature of that influence remains unclear.[658] For both the enthusiasts and detractors

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circonstances difficiles [en ce qui concerne les subsistances] agitent beaucoup les esprits, et que les citoyens, fatigués du présent et inquiets sur l'avenir, continuent de se permettre beaucoup de propose et se livrent à mille conjectures vagues, dont le résultat est toujours douloureux."

[653] Pocock, *Machiavellian Moment*, p.vii; suggestions are made in this direction by Keith Michael Baker, 'Transformations of Classical Republicanism in Eighteenth-Century France,' *Journal of Modern History* 73 (1, March 2001), pp.32-53; on the resonances of classical republicanism in contemporary French politics, see: Chantal Grell, *Le dix-huitième siècle et l'antiquité en France, 1680-1789* (2 vols., Oxford, OUP, 1995).

[654] "Sept Années de Guerre l'ont entierement etaint [sic]": Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution*, p.33.

[655] 'Petition from Granby to General Lincoln (31 January 1787),' in 'Documents Relation to the Shays Rebellion, 1787,' *The American Historical Review* 2 (4, July 1897), pp.693-99, here: p.698. Emphasis added.

[656] Richard B. Morris, *The Forging of the Union, 1781-1789* (New York, NY., Harper & Row Publishers, 1987), p.263.

[657] Sir John Temple, cited in Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution*, p.422.

[658] See, *inter alia*: David P. Szatmary, *Shays' Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1980); Leonard L. Richards, *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's*

of a convention, the Rebellion was evocative of the peculiar temporality of the Revolution. According to 'Centinel,' writing in the *Freeman's Journal* of Pennsylvania:

> The late revolution, having effaced in a great measure all former habits, and the present institutions are so recent, that there exists not that great reluctance to innovation, so remarkable in old communities…for the most comprehensive mind cannot foresee the full operation of material changes on the civil polity.[659]

The shallow historicity of the American Republic, with its yet "recent" institutions, revolutionary erasure of "former habits," and propensity towards "innovation," that had undermined political authority because it created an entirely open future, wherein even "the most comprehensive mind" could not "foresee" changes in "the civil polity."

It is possible to enter the problem, as in the French context, through the peculiarities of the debate surrounding paper money. The Massachusetts rebels, bound to tightening debt repayment schedules and increasingly unable to secure their property, were, as Boissy d'Anglas observed of propertyless French citizens, unlikely to favour "the real good to the apparent good," nor were they inclined to prefer "the interests of the future to that of the present."[660] Petitions advocating the expansion of paper money, which many rural inhabitants viewed as a form of debt relief, exemplified a desire to frustrate linear time.[661] Paper money enabled them to defer the repayment of their long-term debt obligations until – *in the intervening time* – currency inflation rendered it manageable. In March 1786, the lawyer Benjamin Austin identified the debtors demanding paper money, and playing for time by obstructing – often violently – the operations of debt courts, "as practising the greatest art in order to delay every process" of repayment.[662] According to Woody Holton, the opposition to paper money was less about macroeconomic concerns than about keeping impoverished farmers in endless debt cycles that the crisis-level shortage of hard currency prevented them from escaping.[663] Yet this does not account for the apparently broad popularity of paper

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Final Battle (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002); David O. Stewart, *The Summer of 1787: The men who invented the Constitution* (New York, NY., Simon & Schuster, 2007).

[659] Herbert J. Storing, Murray Dry, eds., *The Complete Anti-Federalist* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1981), II, p.137.

[660] François Boissy d'Anglas, *Discours préliminaire au projet de Constitution pour la République Française, prononcé par Boissy-d'Anglas au nom de la Commission des Onze dans le séance du 5 messidor, an 3* (Paris, l'Imprimerie Nationale, 1795), p.33: "L'homme sans propriété, au contraire, a besoin d'un effort constant de vertu pour s'intéresser à l'ordre qui ne lui conserve rien, et pour s'opposer aux mouvemens qui lui donnent quelques espérances. […] Il préfére [sic] le bien réel au bien apparent, l'intérêt de l'avenir à celui du jour."

[661] Gilles Postel-Vinay has noticed a similar phenomenon in the French countryside during the Directory, in which were enabled farmers to wait until their debts were rendered payable by currency depreciation: *La Terre et l'argent: L'agriculture et le credit en France du XVIIIe au début de XXe siècle* (Paris, Albin Michel, 1996); see, also, William Reddy, *Money and Liberty in Modern Europe: A Critique of Historical Understanding* (Cambridge, CUP, 1987), pp.107-53.

[662] Benjamin Austin, cited in Jonathan M. Chu, 'Debt Litigation and Shays's Rebellion,' in Robert A. Gross, ed., *In Debt to Shays: The Bicentennial of an Agrarian Rebellion* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia, 1993), pp.81-99, here: p.82.

[663] Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York, NY., Hill and Wang, 2007), p.39.

money. "The people," Elbridge Gerry observed during the monetary debates of the Convention, "are *for* paper money," especially "when the Legislatures are against it." The popular county conventions of Massachusetts, for example, "had declared a wish for a *depreciating* paper that would sink itself."[664] The perpetuation of debt cycles also meant a constant deferral of debt repayment deadlines. Writing in the *Worcester Magazine*, 'A member of the Convention' saw Shays' rebellion as a reaffirmation of historical cyclicality: the rebels wished to "revert to the principles of the Constitution [of Massachusetts]" – in effect, to intervene in the course of political events in order to reassure their economic liberties, an act they regarded as "not only lawful, but a duty."

To perpetuate the present was also to preserve, unmolested, the liberty acquired during the course of the Revolution, even if this imperilled the future financial stability of the government.[665] As Shays himself had declared in his petition of December 1786, "one moment of liberty" was "worth an eternity of bondage."[666] This statement testifies to the radical contrast emerging between duration ("eternity"), which was evocative of oppression, and instantaneous political participation ("one moment"), which connoted the unbridled exercise of liberty. It may also explain why the rebellion was often defended in a vocabulary redolent of the Declaration of Independence. "[T]he people may," 'A Member of the Convention' further observed, "alter, change or destroy, *when* for the good of the people."[667] That "when" was firmly embedded in a revolutionary "course of human events," a course that was perpetually unfolding in the present. Thus the quasi-cyclical temporality – or perpetuity of present-centred historical experience – invoked by the rebels would foreclose the potential degradation of liberty in the future by re-enacting the revolutionary right to overthrow constituted authority in the present.

The temporal politics of Shays' Rebellion was not without partisan significance.[668] Those defending the rebels, who would later identify as "anti-Federalists," dismissed fears of an instability in historical time. "Nothing in our circumstances," warned 'Brutus Jr.' in a letter to the *New York Journal* from November 1787, could "justify" the convocation of a federal convention: "those who are anxious to precipitate a measure, will always tell us that the present is the critical moment; now is the time, the crisis is arrived, and the present minute

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[664] Elbridge Gerry (7 June, 1787), in Jonathan Elliot, ed., *The Debates in the Several State Conventions of the Adoption of the Federal Constitution* (6 vols., Washington, DC., 1845), V, p.169.
[665] Michael Lienesch, 'Reinterpreting Rebellion: The Influence of Shays's Rebellion on American Political Thought,' in Gross, ed., *In Debt to Shays*, p.161-82.
[666] These remarks were published in the *Worcester Magazine* in December 1786, cited in Sean Condon, *Shays's Rebellion: Authority and Distress in Post-Revolutionary America* (Balitmore, MA., Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), p.78.
[667] 'A Member of the Convention,' cited in Lienesch, 'Reinterpreting Rebellion,' p.170, 165.
[668] Richard Hofstadter, *The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United State, 1780-1840* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 1969); on prototype party politics and American Jacobinism, see: Albert Koschnik, 'The Democratic Societies of Philadelphia and the Limits of American Public Sphere, c.1793-95,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 58 (July, 2001), pp.615-36.

must be seized."[669] For anti-Federalists, the vigilant and the virtuous were concurrent civic categories; anxiety was a necessary component of republican life, it bolstered republican virility and vigilance. For the nascent Federalists, meanwhile, the historical experience garnered under the Confederation – and during Shays' Rebellion, in particular – demonstrated the need to finally conclude the Revolution. Indeed, by categorising the violence as a "rebellion," the Federalists could distinguish it from the American Revolution, which would henceforth be demarcated as a *singular*, irreversible rupture in linear time – as neither cyclical event nor "ongoing" act. The conceptualisation of revolutionary completion therefore necessitated the termination of revolutionary temporality.

By the mid-1780s, the "now" that had once tried men's souls had become a present-oriented "phrenzy," a threat to the future stability of the Republic. "*Now* is the time," jeered one pamphleteer, "when men act before they reflect."[670] For the Union to end its apparently daily fight for survival the future of America would need in some sense to become governable – measures would need to be taken in the present that might pre-empt the conditions of the future. "Have we not reason," the Rev. Thomas Thacher told the Massachusetts ratification convention, "to fear new commotions in this commonwealth?"[671] Terminating revolutionary temporality, however, might enclose – and thus stabilise – the historical event of Shays' Rebellion as an instructive space of experience. In his *History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts* (1788), for example, George Richards Minot cast this "period of misfortune" as a "most fruitful source of instruction." It was only through "investigating the causes of national commotions," by "tracing their progress," and "carefully marking the means through which they are brought to a conclusion," that "established principles" could be deduced "for preserving the future" of the Union.[672] In 1787, however, neither the stabilisation nor the accumulation of "fruitful sources of instruction" – of experience, in short – could materialise since the Republic did not have enough time in which to complete these processes. Continued historical rupture situated the present within a seemingly endless concatenation of contingent events.[673] In May 1787, James Warren wrote to John Adams to express concern the county conventions determined "to annihilate the Senate," depicting their rejection of this deliberative body, and of experience in general, as a form of political infantilisation. "The Truth of the matter is, the People resemble a child." Though denuded of acquiring experience,

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[669] Storing, Dry, eds., *The Complete Anti-Federalist*, III, p.39
[670] 'Cassius,' *Worcester Magazine* (January, 1787), cited in Lienesch, 'Reinterpreting Rebellion,' p.168, who added that when "the passions are inflamed, the solid principles of reason and truth scarcely examined."
[671] *Debates, Resolutions, and other Proceedings of the Convention of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston, MA., Oliver & Munroe, and Joshua Cushing, 1808), p.187.
[672] George Richards Minot, *The History of the Insurrections, in Massachusetts, in the year 1786: and the rebellion consequent thereon* (Worcester, MA., Isaiah Thomas, 1788), p.iii.
[673] "Oh, my countrymen," wailed the federalist-leaning *Massachusetts Centinel*, "through how many scenes and changes must we pass! the wide the unbounded prospect lies before us – but, shadows, clouds, and darkness rest upon it!": *Massachusetts Centinel* (30 May, 1787), VII, issue 21 (Boston, Mass.), pp.83-4.

the Republic was not somehow preternaturally protected from premature ageing; instead, "the People, who have no Stability," were engaging in a temporal politics that did not prolong the present, but simply made it prey to contingencies. "Such is the situation of things here that no man can calculate the Events of the present year."[674]

Since 1793 the French Revolution had also been assailed by internal "rebels," notably in the Grand-Ouest, where royalist and Catholic sentiment, antagonised by attacks on refractory clergy and the execution of the king, simmered. Here, the temporal reforms of the Revolution were anathematised: the *fêtes nationales*, the *décadi*, the "naturalised" allegories of republican time occupied only a "modest place" in rural festive culture.[675] Renewed efforts at imposing the observance of the calendar after Thermidor thus underscored the continuing concern that a common experience of time had failed to settle across France.[676] Although the Republican calendar theoretically dictated the rhythm of French festive life, it remained patchily applied, even during the Terror. Under the Directory, the calendar underwent what Sanja Perovic has termed "dematerialization" – it became an instrument for charting rational civil time, and no longer reflected the "presence of the people" in the political life of the Republic.[677] Gone were the chialistic ambitions of the Cult of the Supreme Being, the "*sansculottides*," the pretensions to uchronic, millennial revolutionary finality.[678] The calendar nevertheless remained in place, even as it was emptied out of festive or historical significance. In Pluviôse, Year V (16 February, 1797), the municipal administrators of Saumur – a commune located between the Vendée and Sarthe, the flashpoints of royalist rebellion – reported "with sadness" to the Council of the Five Hundred that "the celebration of national festivals" was "absolutely non-existence in the countryside."

> Citizen legislators! After 9 Thermidor, fluctuating opinion awaited a direction that has not been given to it: the enemies of the common good [*la chose publique*] seize it more and more: very soon it will be entirely out of your hands. […] There is nothing to await from time: wickedness spreads with a rapidity that is frightening to all the friends of the common good.[679]

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[674] James Warren to John Adams (18 May, 1787), in *Warren-Adams Letters: Being Chiefly a Correspondence among John Adams, Samuel Adams, and James Warren* (2 vols., Boston, MA., Massachusetts Historical Society, 1925), II, pp.291-2.

[675] Michel Vovelle, *The Revolution against the Church: From Reason to the Supreme Being* (trans. Alan José), (Columbus, OH., Ohio State University Press, 1996), p.176.

[676] The supreme essay on time and festive culture, and the perceived need to create a single experience of republican temporality, is Ozouf, *Les fêtes révolutionnaires* (Paris, Gallimard, 1976); Corbin, *Village Bells*, p.32.

[677] Perovic, *The Calendar*, p.182; Ozouf, 'Thermidor ou le travail de l'oubli,' in *De Révolution en République*, pp.654-69.

[678] What was not gone, however, was the determination, as Perovic observes, to "transform the ongoing power struggles that threatened to capsize the new republic into a *common experience of time itself,*" which betrays the fact that contemporaries understood the translation of political legitimacy into time as a matter of public debate: Perovic, *The Calendar*, p.2; the failure to create *common time* is explored in chapter 5 in the context of the Napoleonic Empire.

[679] AN D/38/3, 'Les Administrateurs Municipaux de la Commune de Saumur au Corps Législatif (28 Pluviôse, an V)': "C'est avec doleur [sic] que nous vous déclarons le peu d'impression que font actuellement sur le peuple, vos décrets pour la célébration des fêtes nationales: ils sont absolument nuls dans les campagnes." "Citoyen

There is a familiarity to these exclamations: the urgent, temporalized terminology, the gnawing sense of uncertainty, the fluctuations and declamations, the malignity of time itself. Debilitated by "fluctuating opinion" – by the post-Thermidor power vacuum – the municipal administrators was unable to suppress alternative experiences of time, in particular, the royalist and Catholic observation of *l'ére vulgaire*, which, in the surrounding countryside, connoted a rejection of republican time schemas.[680] The Saumur address therefore positioned the perceived need to control time – conceived in terms of the festive and civic life of the nation – and the regulation of "the common good" as coterminous political efforts.

The heightened enforcement of republican time undermined the political structure of the post-Thermidor republic. For all the rhetoric of the constitutional debates of Year III, the finished product did little to stabilise the concept of historical experience.[681] Annual elections, and a mandate preventing citizens from becoming electors two years in a row, "put the people in a fever state at least six months out of twelve," observed Pierre Cabanis.[682] Whilst certain electoral mechanisms theoretically counteracted sudden modifications of political equilibria, if a single political force should ever gain a majority in both chambers, the Councils of the Five Hundred and the Ancients, the only means of restoring balance was by recourse to coup. As a consequence, the make-up of the legislative chambers swung like a pendulum between royalist and neo-Jacobin factions. "Oppositionists are constantly in confrontation," lamented Lombard de Langres, "the conflicts of yesterday are rekindled, to be engaged in again tomorrow…and [the chambers] can attain neither consistency nor poise."[683] In the coups of Fructidor 1797 and Floréal 1798, elections were quashed, deputies exiled, and the constitution made repeatedly to bend to "exigencies" and "contingencies."[684] Reform, meanwhile, was impossible. Any revision, however simple, had to be ratified on three separate occasions by a

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Législateurs! Après le 9. Thermidor, l'opinion flottant attendait une direction qui ne lui a par été donnée: les ennemis de la chose publique s'en emparent de plus en plus: bientôt elle sera entièrement hors de vos mains…Il n'y a rien à attendre du tems: le mal augmente avec une rapidité effrayante pour les amis de la chose publique."

[680] On post-Thermidor Catholic and royalist observances of alternative temporalities as well as efforts to impose republican time, see: Noah Shusterman, *Religion and the Politics of Time: Holidays in France from Louis XIV to Napoleon* (Washington, DC., The Catholic University of America Press, 2010), p.161-205, and, idem., *The French Revolution: Faith, Desire, and Politics* (New York., NY, Routledge, 2014), pp.235-54.

[681] The relevance of "experience," as opposed to abstract, utopian "theorising," is discussed in depth in Andrew J. S. Jainchill, *Reimagining Politics After the Terror: The Republican Origins of French Liberalism* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2008), pp.32-5.

[682] Pierre Cabanis, cited in Lynn Hunt, David Lansky, Paul Hanson, 'The Failure of the Liberal Republic in France, 1795-1799: The Road to Brumaire,' in *The Journal of Modern European History* 51 (4, 1979), pp.734-59, here: p.737; on Directorial elections, see: J.-R. Suratteau, *Les Elections de l'an VI et le 'Coup d'État du 22 Floréal' (11 Mai 1798): Étude documentaire, statistique et analytique: Essai d'interprétation* (Paris, Les Belles Lettres, 1971); Melvin Edelstein, *The French Revolution and the Birth of Electoral Democracy* (Surrey, Ashgate Publishing, 2014), p.317-32.

[683] Lombard de Langres, cited in Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and his collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York, NY., W.W. Norton, 2001), p.7.

[684] Martyn Lyons, *France Under the Directory* (Cambridge, CUP, 1975), p.215-229; A. Meynier, *Les coups d'état du Directoire* (3 vols., Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1927-28); Isser Woloch, *Jacobin Legacy: The Democratic Movement Under the Directory* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1970), p.311-68.

majority in both chambers at three-year intervals, and then presented before an extraordinary assembly at the end of a 9-year process.

The constitutional debates of 1795 had appeared in *Le Moniteur* under the optimistic headline, "discussions on the means of terminating the Revolution."[685] Yet the Revolution would not end; and by 1799 the incessant sense of apprehension for the future had placed "the public mood in agony." In March, French forces were sent into retreat across the Rhine; by April, the vassal republics in Italy had begun to disintegrate. The threat of invasion now seemed more real than at any point since 1793. In July, revitalised by the foundation of the Manège Club, the neo-Jacobin faction in the Council of the Five Hundred passed a Law of Hostages – in effect, a new Law of Suspects – raising the prospect of a further legislative coup; by August, with the *département* of the Haute-Garonne convulsed in a royalist uprising, the Directory approved a forced loan worth 100 million francs.[686] "Day by day our state was becoming ever more alarming," sighed Cambacérès in July.[687] Yet the Directory was not moribund; in fact, by October, French forces had defeated an encroaching Anglo-Russian army in Holland and stabilised the Swiss frontier. "We have not seen a more perfect calm reign here for a long time," observed the bewildered Prussian ambassador to Paris.[688]

What truly robbed the Directory of long-term political viability was the temporalisation of political anxiety. Anticipations and apprehensions for the future – fears that, by 1799, had coagulated into vaguely articulated forebodings of imminent collapse – became accepted facets of revolutionary experience. Whilst "perfect calm" might pervade political life for a day, week or month, the perception that stability could not last long was overwhelming – and overwhelmingly exhausting. France, remarked Constant, a nation once "drunk on a revolution which not a single horror had sullied," had, since 1795, laboured under a simple "feeling of exhaustion."[689] It was the failure of individual events to crystallise into history that gave the experience of time its ever-fluctuating, even liquid character. "Patriots," observed one report to the bureau central in the months before Brumaire, "are uneasy and troubled; a cruel incertitude ravages them." Whilst the "orders of superior authorities are poorly and slowly executed," there seemed never to be enough time to employ "half-measures," the application of which would only provide "a palliative remedy to an evil which

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[685] This ambition is contextualized by Ozouf, 'Thermidor ou le travail de l'oubli,' pp.664-5: "Discussion sur les moyens de terminer la Révolution."
[686] Michael D. Bordo and Eugene N. White, 'British and French finance during the Napoleonic Wars,' in Bordo and Forrest Capie, eds., *Monetary Regimes in Transition* (Cambridge, CUP, 1993), pp.241-273.
[687] Jean-Jaques-Régis de Cambacérès, *Mémoires inédits,* Laurence Chatel de Brancion, ed., (2 vols., Paris, Perrin, 1999), I, 'Du 2 thermidor an vii au 1 vendémiaire an viii,' p.419: "De jour en jour notre état devenait plus alarmant"; see, also: Bernard Gainot, 'La légende noire du Directoire,' in *Napoléon: de l'histoire à la légende. Actes du colloque des 30 novembre et 1er décembre 1999 à l'auditorium Austerlitz du musée de l'Armée, Hôtel national des Invalides* (Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose, 1999), pp.15-26.
[688] Philip G. Dwyer, *Napoleon: The Path to Power* (London, Bloomsbury, 2007), p.455.
[689] Constant, cited in Bronislaw Baczko, *Ending the Terror: The French Revolution after Robespierre* (trans. Michel Petheram), (Cambridge, CUP, 1994), p.216.

is constantly growing." Unable to quantify future conditions, the report wearily concluded that the Republic was at last slipping towards its final crisis. "Imperceptibly, everything is disintegrating, everything is decomposing."[690]

II. Governing Futurity: temporality, historicity and legitimacy at the Constitutional Convention (1787) and the coup of Brumaire (1799)

Who can blame the Brumairians for depicting the Directory as a disaster?[691] It may have been in their interests, of course, to condemn the previous regime as dysfunctional, but this does not account for the way in which they framed their criticisms, which repeatedly inferred the contingent temporality of the Republic as underlying impairment in political power. In the immediate aftermath of Brumaire, for example, the congratulatory addresses sent from the provinces to the provisional Consuls made repeated reference to the recently imminent, yet narrowly averted collapse of society. The French Republic seemed to have been standing before an "abyss," contemplating its final extirpation. "The abyss was opening beneath our feet," declared the municipal authority of Cahors, "[a] few more moments of dormancy, and we would perish."[692] The magistrates of the civil court in the Saône-et-Loire agreed: "We were on the edge of an abyss, when the events of 18 Brumaire occurred in the very nick of time."[693] The coup had pulled France back from the brink, rescuing the Republic from the onrush of annihilation [Fig. 9].

At an analogous period in America, similar statements were being intoned. "You are on the brink of a dreadful precipice," warned William Findlay who, despite his anti-Federalist leaning, could not help associating the obscured political future and the chaos of the present from the prognostication of disaster. "One step more, and perhaps the scene of freedom is closed forever in America," a single step over a "precipice" that might entail "the ruin of millions yet unborn."[694] "No Morn[ing] ever dawned more favourable than ours did,"

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[690] 'Rapport du bureau central du 19 prairial, an VII (6 June 1799),' in Aulard, *Paris pendant la reaction thermidorienne*, p.548: "Les patriotes…sont inquiets et troublés; une cruelle incertitude les dévore. Les arrêtés des autorités supérieures sont mal et lentement exécutés." "Insensiblement tout se désorganise, tout se décompose. Si l'on veut raviver l'esprit public en agonie, des demi-mesures ne sont qu'un remède palliatif à un mal qui va toujours croissant."

[691] Even Bourrienne, who later became a critic of Napoleon, remarked: "Doubtless the legality of the acts of the 18th Brumaire may be disputed; but who will venture to say that the immediate result of that day ought not to be regarded as a great blessing to France? Whoever denies this can have no idea of the wretched state of every branch of the administration at that deplorable epoch": Louis Antoine Fauvelet de Bourrienne, *Memoirs of Napoleon Bonaparte* (trans., ed., R. W. Phipps), (4 vols., Rockside, MD., Wildside Press, 2010), I, p.260; "There was more antipathy for the fallen government," observes Jean Tulard, "than sympathy for the new one," cited in Louis Bergeron, *France Under Napoleon* (trans. R. R. Palmer), (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1990), p.88.

[692] AN AF/IV/1443: "L'abîme était ouvert sous nos pas. Encore quelques moments de sommeil et nous périssions."

[693] Malcolm Crook, *Napoleon Comes to Power: Democracy and Dictatorship in Revolutionary France, 1795-1804* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1998), p.69.

[694] William Findlay, *Address from an Officer of the Late Continental Army* (Philadelphia, PA., 1787), pp.7-8.

observed Washington in October 1786, yet "no day was ever more clouded than the present!" In less than a decade, the future had become hopelessly "clouded," the promise of independence already seemed spent. "How melancholy is the reflection that in so short a space, we should have made such large strides towards fulfil[ing] the prediction of our transatlantic foes! – 'leave them to themselves, and their government will soon dissolve.'"[695] "[B]ut the other day," it seemed, "we were shedding our blood to obtain the Constitutions

Fig. 9. 'La France avant le 18 brumaire de l'an VIII: eplorée, denuée de tout, entrainée par le desespoir et la discorde, elle est ranimée par l'esperance et remise par Bonaparte entre les mains de la paix. Le tems trace cet heureux jour dans les fastes de l'histoire' (1800)

under which we now live," yet now Americans everywhere were "unsheathing the Sword to overturn them!" "The thing is so unaccountable that I hardly know how to realize it, or to persuade my self that I am not under the vision of a dream."[696] In a context of historical compression, the future inevitably appears ungovernable, since the present, assaulted by the incoherent onset of events, becomes a restricted zone of political manoeuvre, a garbage heap of already out-of-date experiences. It was impossible to establish a durable political regime

[695] Washington to James Madison (5 November, 1786), in W.W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series (6 vols., Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 1995), IV, pp.331-32.
[696] Washington to David Humphreys (26 December, 1786), in ibid, pp.477-78.

"in so short a space of time," as Washington observed, when the duration of the present seemed constantly to elapse.

The crises that befell both the Confederation and the Directory were simultaneously conceived as part of a general crisis in historical time. The Constitutional Convention and the coup of Brumaire may therefore be seen as analogous political events, borne of parallel desires to restructure historical experience, in particular to render the sense of rupture between the events of the present and the onset of the future less temporally abrupt. A capacity to control the perception of time therefore undergirded the justificatory logics of the Convention delegates and Brumairians. It also pervaded the invective levelled by opponents. As a consequence, the vocabulary of political legitimacy, which was deployed both to justify and to deride these events, was studded with historical and temporal allusions.

It is here that a comparative account of the actions and motivations of George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte becomes indispensible. Despite the historiographical firewall that has separated them, there is a curious resemblance in their respective ascents to power. According to Matthew Flynn and Stephen Griffin, their only dual biographers, "the steps that both Washington and Napoleon took on the road from military commander to civilian leader," at the Constitutional Convention and following the coup of Brumaire, mark the moment at which their pathways most clearly "diverge." Whilst the latter opted for a "sober and deferential" route to civilian governance, the former was guilty of having made a "bombastic and vain" grab for power.[697] In reality, the Convention and Brumaire, when compared as efforts to establish post-revolutionary political regimes, share certain striking structural similarities. Washington, like Napoleon, played an indispensible role. His presence determined the competencies of the executive office itself. It is unlikely that the authority of the presidency would "have been so great," remarked the South Carolina delegate, Pierce Butler, "had not many members cast their eyes towards General Washington as President."[698]

In his revisionist account of 1787, Eric Nelson wonders if the Philadelphia Convention, which "historiographical orthodoxies" have often characterised as a repudiation of the Revolution, ought to "be regarded as a sort of Thermidorian Reaction *avant la lettre*."[699] The better comparison is with Brumaire.

i. Washington's Brumaire

[697] Flynn and Griffin, *Washington and Napoleon*, p.79.
[698] Pierce Butler to Weedon Butler (5 May, 1788), in Farrand, ed., *Records of the Federal Convention*, III, p.302.
[699] Eric Nelson, *Royalist Revolution: Monarchy and the American Founding* (Cambridge, MA., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014), p.184.

From 25 May to 17 September 1787, the Constitutional Convention sat in session, furtively deliberating the future of the American Republic.[700] The venue was familiar: Independence Hall had been the maternity ward of the Declaration and since served as the assembly chamber for the Continental Congress. If the coup of Brumaire has become indelibly associated with Bonaparte, then a similar association should be made between the Convention and Washington; and if, as Sieyès would later observe, every coup needed its "sword," then Washington surely represented the heavy artillery. Indeed, at a civil assembly intended to resolve civil discord, Washington openly paraded his martial prowess: he was the only delegate in full military uniform. Whilst the former commanding general of the Continental Army may have viewed this as the most appropriate attire, it was certainly a statement of intent. For several months Washington had prevaricated, fearful that political events "have a tendency to sweep me back into the tide of public affairs."[701] Several times he had disappointed James Madison – the Convention's most enthusiastic canvasser – by refusing to attend any assembly that might remedy the chronic dysfunctionality of the Confederation.[702] Ultimately, the arm-twisting proved irrelevant: Washington would eventually come to conclude that a federal Convention represented the last best opportunity to rescue the Republic.

A central assertion of the Constitutional Convention was the commonplace claim that the Articles of Confederation were beyond reform. They did, in fact, contain provisions for constitutional amendment, just so long as those amendments were initiated by the Congress and approved by all state legislatures. In 1787, however, reform was very swiftly struck from the agenda. Instead, the Convention delegates sketched an entirely new blueprint for government, essentially abolishing the Confederation. When the Constitution was finalised, they set a ratification threshold of nine, and not a majority of states, and bypassed the legislatures by decreeing a series of extraordinary state conventions. "What they actually did," observed the American political scientist, John W. Burgess, "was to assume constituent powers, ordain a constitution of government and of liberty, and demand a plebiscite thereon over the heads of all existing legally or organised power." Had Napoleon – or some other

[700] Max M. Edling, 'A More Perfect Union: The Framing and Ratification of the Constitution,' in Edward G. Gray, Jane Kamensky, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution* (Oxford, OUP, 2013), pp.388-406; the classic account may be found in Max Farrand, *The Framing of the Constitution of the United States* (Yale, CT., Yale University Press, 1913); Christian G. Fritz, *The People and America's Constitutional Tradition before the Civil War* (Cambridge, CUP, 2007), pp.123-25 and *passim*; on "royalism" as a contributory factor in the deliberations of the Convention, see: Nelson, *The Royalist Revolution*, pp.184-228.

[701] Washington to Randolph (28 March, 1787), in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series, V, pp.112-13; remarkably, in a recent book by Michael J. Klarman, entitled, *The Framers' Coup: The Making of the United States Constitution* (Oxford, OUP, 2016), the credentials of the Convention as a "coup" are barely discussed at all, indeed the idea is barely evoked beyond the title.

[702] On James Madison's influence of proceedings, both before and during the Convention, see: Lance Banning, *The Sacred Fire of Liberty: James Madison and the Founding of the Federal Republic* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 1995).

adventurer – committed similar acts, "they would have been pronounced *coups d'état*."[703] This went far beyond what Congress had ordained when it specified powers to "correct and enlarge" the Articles. Thus when Washington finally decided to attend the Philadelphia Convention, he would do so fully aware that, "in strict propriety," an assembly to alter the constitutional character of the Confederation "may not be legal." His justification for its convocation would therefore need to reach beyond the law; in fact, Washington, like Napoleon, would locate the legitimacy of the undertaking within a context of revolutionary temporality.[704]

For the coordinators of the Constitutional Convention, theirs was a paper conspiracy – a programme to overhaul political power, coordinated through carefully crafted letters and missives. The "legallity of this Convention," Washington privately admitted to Henry Knox in February 1787, was deeply "problematical." "The powers are wanting, none can deny," he observed, but the process of deciding "through what medium" a renewal of governance was to take place had itself become a worrying cause of delay:

> That which takes the shortest course to obtain them, will, in my opinion, under present circumstances, be found best. Otherwise, like a house on fire, whilst the most regular mode of extinguishing it is contending for, the building is reduced to ashes.[705]

By comparing the Articles of Confederation to a house on fire, Washington underscored the prevalent sense of impending political disaster. The comparison also afforded Washington the opportunity to contemplate extraordinary measures. The "present circumstances," after all, had rendered the "regular mode" of political reform temporally impracticable: it was therefore necessary to take the "shortest course" towards averting the collapse of the Union, even if such as course might also appear legally "irregular."[706] The metaphor was temporally

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[703] John W. Burgess, *Political Science and Comparative Constitutional Law* (2 vols., Boston, Ginn & Co., 1890), I, p.105; see, also: Richard S. Kay, 'The Illegality of the Constitution,' *Constitutional Commentary* 4 (Winter, 1987), pp.57-80; Horst Dippel, 'The Changing Idea of Popular Sovereignty in Early American Constitutionalism: Breaking Away from European Patterns,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 16 (1, 1996), pp.21-45.

[704] Is there any point in describing the Convention as "illegal"? As many historians have argued, the terminology here is entirely contextual: Bruce Ackerman and Neal Katyal, in 'Our Unconventional Founding,' *University of Chicago Law Review* 62 (Spring, 1995), pp.475-573, opt for "extra-legal," whilst Jack Rakove, in 'The Super-Legality of the Constitution, or, a Federalist Critique of Bruce Ackerman's Neo-Federalism,' *Yale Law Journal* 108 (June, 1999), pp.1931-58, prefers "super-legal," rather than the seemingly more condemnatory illegal, since in the context of a period of constitutional experimentation, when legal codes were constantly being made and remade, and when most state constitutions were issued by legislative "proclamation" rather than popular "ratification," legal and constitutional practices were themselves opaque and subject to flux. The same is true of Directory France, of course, and yet Brumaire is termed a "coup" – an emphatically illegal usurpation of constituted authority – whilst the drafting of the Constitution is remembered as merely a "convention," almost as though it were a gentile town-hall meeting.

[705] Washington to Knox (3 February, 1787), in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, V, pp.7-9.

[706] James Wilson employed the same temporalised metaphor, telling the Convention on 30 August, 1787, that he was quite content to see extraordinary measures adopted: "The House on fire must be extinguished, without a scrupulous regard to ordinary rights": in Elliot, ed., *The Debates in the Several State Conventions*, V, p.499.

charged, but it was also politically ambiguous: might it not be better to prevent any further damage done to a burned-out building by simply demolishing it and starting anew?

Washington arrived at the conclusion that the constitutional model of the Confederation had moved beyond any capacity for timely self-reform.[707] There were now no legal channels left through which the apparent imminent disintegration of the Union could be averted; and a convention that could not "*ordain*, but only *recommend*," as Jay observed, would simply "produce endless Discussion."[708] As a consequence, extra-legal methods would be required to meet the urgency of a political situation that could no longer be remedied by mere recourse to the law. However hesitantly phrased, Washington made these observations long before Congress even considered lending its approval to a convention. In fact, by implying that the participants to a convention would be openly defying the constitutional authority of both Congress and the states, Washington was technically conspiring to commit treason.[709] He was not alone in this view. "For a number of reasons," wrote Rufus King to Elbridge Gerry in February, "and although my sentiments are the same to the legality of this measure" – that a convention would be *illegal* – "I think we ought not to oppose." Despite his reservations, King seemed to imply that the prevalent sense of political urgency had changed the legal complexion of political deliberation: "Events are hurrying to a crisis; prudent and sagacious men should be ready to seize the most favourable circumstances to establish a more permanent and vigorous government."[710]

The "most prevalent idea" amongst the delegates, observed George Mason as the Convention got underway, was "a total alteration of the present federal system, and substituting a great national council or parliament."[711] Political urgency found immediate expression in the opening remarks of Edmund Randolph, delegate from Virginia, who, on 28 May, introduced the Virginia Plan, which would create a tripartite model of government, divided between executive, legislative and judicial branches, and replace a confederation premised upon state-oriented representation with a federal government. This "was really

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[707] In 1783, at the attempted Newburgh coup, Washington seemingly retained some hope that the Confederation could resolve its own internal difficulties, see: Richard H. Kohn, *Eagle and Sword: The Beginning of a Military Establishment in America* (New York, NY., 1975), pp.17-39, and idem, 'The Inside History of the Newburgh Conspiracy: America and the Coup d'État,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (1970), pp.187-220; but by 1787, when he received similar invocations to partake in a dubiously legal undertaking, he justified his participation by constantly referencing the imminent collapse of constituted authority. Joseph Ellis has argued that within "the long arc of American history," Washington's refusal to support the Newburgh coup prevented the American Revolution from following the same route as the French, what "Napoleon would do after him" in 1799; in fact, Washington would simply wait four years, for whilst no "military dictatorship" would be established – in either America or France – an illegal usurpation of constituted authority did certainly take place: *The Quartet: Orchestrating the Second American Revolution, 1783-1789* (New York, NY., Alfred A. Knopf, 2015), p.59.

[708] John Jay to George Washington (7 January, 1787), in Henry P. Johnston, ed., *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay* (4 vols., New York, NY., G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-93), III, p.228.

[709] James R. Gaines, *For Liberty and Glory: Washington, Lafayette, and their Revolutions* (New York, NY., W.W. Norton & Co., 2007), p.233.

[710] Rufus King to Elbridge Gerry (11 February, 1787), in King, ed., *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, I, pp.201-2.

[711] Farrand, *Records*, III, p.23.

another coup," observes Joseph Ellis, since only seven states were present for the majority vote, and none of the New England delegations had even arrived. Acknowledgement of the Virginia Plan effectively eliminated any prospect of amending the Articles of Confederation, the exclusive legal premise of the Convention.[712]

From the very beginning, the legitimacy of extra-legal activity was defended on the basis of political urgency. The assembly had been convened to combat "the prospect of anarchy from the laxity of government every where," declared Randolph, who implicitly associated the uncertainty concerning the future complexion of the American Republic with the inability of the Articles to provide the means of stable governance in the present.[713] Washington's justification of the Convention was derived from a similar perspective on historical time. Any attempt to amend the Articles would be an empty exercise, he insisted, rather "like the propping of a house which is ready to fall, and which no shoars can support." A convention, by contrast, might reorder the apparently fateful future course of the American Republic; it might, in fact, enable America to intervene in its own future, to extinguish the flames engulfing its constitutional edifice before it was "reduced to ashes." It was therefore the temporality of the political crisis that persuaded Washington to give his backing to an "illegal" convention. As he told Jay in March 1787, it might be,

> the last peaceable mode of essaying the practicability of the pres[en]t form, *without a greater lapse of time than the exigency of our Affairs will admit*. In strict propriety a Convention so holden may not be legal.[714]

There seemed to be no other choice – there seemed to be no more time. Remarkably, this is the same metaphor that Napoleon would later use to justify the coup of Brumaire. "When the house is crumbling," he told his co-conspirator, August de Marmont, "is there time to busy oneself in the garden? A change here is indispensible."[715] That which activated political action could also legitimise it, since in the uncertain "lapse of time" – the locus of political anxiety – that seemed to separate perceived political deterioration and anticipated political destruction, legal remedies proved themselves too slow. By contrast, *legal* legitimacy could always be retroactively bestowed, when the "exigency" of "affairs" had been stabilised – or, in other words, when there was *more time*. Certainly the Convention was a usurpation of the

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[712] Ellis, *The Quartet*, p.135; for the full extent of the powers with which the Plan suddenly invested the Convention, see: Klarman, *The Framers' Coup*, pp.140-47.
[713] *Records*, I, p.19.
[714] George Washington to John Jay (10 March, 1787), in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, The Confederation Series, V, p.80; emphasis added. It is difficult to overstate how powerfully Washington believed the Articles of Confederation were fatally weakened, and how suddenly chaos might result: as he told Jefferson on 30 May, 1787, "the situation of the General Governm[en]t…is shaken to its foundation – and liable to be overset by every blast. In a word, it is at an end, and unless a remedy is soon applied, anarchy & confusion will inevitable ensue": ibid, p.208.
[715] Robert B. Asprey, *The Rise of Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York, NY., Basic Books, 2000), p.335.

constituted authority of the Articles, yet, as Washington artfully put it, Congress "may give it a colouring by recommendation" after the Convention had concluded.[716] The legal logic of the Convention would have to unfold achronologically – a prudent response, Washington believed, to the perceived pace of political deterioration.

The viability of any coup, of course, depends upon the maximisation of political speed during the transitional phase.[717] "The day for destroying the government was over," remarked Bourrienne on 19 Brumaire: "the night had to be devoted to building a new one." This embrace of intense political velocity enables the conspirators to outpace the potential coordination of oppositional forces, which is perhaps why the recollections of the Brumairians are replete with temporal allusions – "there was no time to lose," recalled Bourrienne; those wavering in their support "must decide today," insisted Napoleon, "tomorrow will be too late"; "Tell your General to be speedy," announced Fouché, "if he delays, he is lost."[718] The appropriation of political speed, however, also legitimises the coup itself. In a context where time seems to be constantly elapsing, where a slipstream of events is created that places the future existence of the state in imminent danger, it becomes possible to replace the accepted parameters of legal political action for the logical velocity of the coup. A prevalent sense of urgency reconfigures the framework of "legal" action within the state, meaning that the coup adheres to an extra-legal modality of time that actually derives its legitimacy from the temporality of the ongoing revolutionary crisis.

Overthrowing the Articles of Confederation and the Constitution of Year III in order to rescue the republic from imminent dissolution suggested that political and legal temporalities moved at different tempos. The Brumairians deployed the rhetoric of imminence with the ease of old habits. At 7am on 18 Brumaire, the Council of Ancients was summoned into an extraordinary session. Bewildered and bleary-eyed, the deputies were immediately informed of an imminent Jacobin insurrection. There was no proof of this claim, of course – none was needed. In a political atmosphere pullulating with potential conspiracies, the deputies were habituated to anticipating intrigue.[719] This enabled the Brumairians to frame the advent of political crisis in terms of its potentially abrupt actualisation: "subversives from all over Europe had been arriving in Paris in droves *during*

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[716] George Washington to John Jay (10 March, 1787), in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, The Confederation Series, V, p.80.
[717] Edward Luttwak, *Coup d'État: A Practical Handbook* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1979), pp.58-9.
[718] Bourrienne, *Memoirs*, I, p.239.
[719] On the culture of conspiracy that infested the political life of the Directory, see: Laura Mason, '"Never Was a Plot so Holy: Gracchus Babeuf and the End of the French Revolution,' in Campbell, et al, eds., *Conspiracy and the French Revolution*, pp.172-88; G. Cubitt, 'Denouncing Conspiracy in the French Revolution,' *Renaissance and Modern Studies* 33 (1989), pp.144-58; Bernard Gainot, 'Espace public et conjuration sous le Directoire. À propos d'un texte de Jean-Nicolas Pache,' in Pierre Serna, Bernard Gainot, eds., *Secret et République, 1795-1840* (Clermont-Ferrand, Presses Universitaires Blaise-Pascal, 2004), pp.57-72; Howard G. Brown, *Ending the French Revolution: Violence, Justice, Repression* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 2006), pp.23-46.

the past few days."[720] Once again, the continuing existence of the revolutionary state was situated inside an unstable time lag – the temporal asymmetry between the reception of information and its real-time realisation. Political events proceeded within a time frame whose scope and duration was unascertainable. Insurrection was thus imminent, and its perpetrators (whether fictional or not) already had a head start. For the sake of their safety, declared Claude Ambrose Régnier, the Councils were to be immediately relocated from Paris to Saint-Cloud under the supervision of General Bonaparte.[721]

The manipulation of time is absolutely essential to the success of the coup. If quickly brought to term, the time span available for a coherent opposition to form and for alternative political futures to proliferate may be effectively reduced. By the morning of 19 Brumaire royalist agitators had already begun prophesising the return of Louis XVIII and the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty.[722] Stretching the coup across two days was thus fraught with peril. The comte Miot de Mélito expressed his own sense of anticipation for the unforeseeable: "I floated amidst that agitation of the mind that always stimulates hardly known [*mal connus*] events."[723] In the rapidly truncating time frame of the coup, legitimacy constantly seeped away from the conspirators; hours or even minutes lost could prove pivotal.

When the deputies arrived at Saint-Cloud, their designated assembly rooms were still filled with frantic carpenters fashioning makeshift benches and tribunes. Politics now began moving faster than logistics. The deputies were left to loiter in the gardens of the Orangerie, the venue allocated to the Five Hundred, and to speculate about the validity of the "conspiracy" against the Republic. During the hour-and-a-half that passed, a rearguard action formed, rallied by the neo-Jacobins, which meant that when Lucien finally declared the Five Hundred in session, the recalcitrant deputies were ready to pounce. By querying the validity of their relocation, they immediately seized the legal initiative; but by then demanding that an oath of loyalty be taken – in which every single deputy would need to climb to the rostrum and pledge their commitment to the Constitution – they just as swiftly forfeited the temporal initiative. Time swung back in favour of the Brumairians.

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[720] A declaration from a Brumairian delegation was read out to the Council of Elders, detailed in, Crook, *Napoleon Comes to Power*, p.55.

[721] This was a perfectly legal manoeuvre: under article 102 of the Constitution of Year III, the Council of Ancients was empowered to transfer the legislative chamber without the prior permission of either the Council of Five Hundred or the Directorial Executive if it could satisfactorily justify its decision.

[722] A. Aulard, 'Les causes et le lendemain du 18 Brumaire,' *Études et leçons sur la Révolution française* (9 vols., Paris, Félix Alcan, 1898), II, pp.187-250. The Directory found itself accosted by prophecies of the imminent return of the Bourbon dynasty: according to a police report from July, 1799, several placards were affixed to walls around the faubourg Honoré, which read: "Vive Louis XVIII, nous le voulons et nous l'aurons!": cited in Jean-Paul Bertaud, *1799, Bonaparte prend le pouvoir: Le 18 Brumaire an VIII, la République meurt-elle assassinée?* (Paris, Éditions Complexe, 2000), p.98.

[723] Miot de Mélito, *Mémoires du comte Miot de Mélito, ancien minister, ambassadeur, conseiller d'État et membre de l'Institut* (3 vols., Paris, Michel-Lévy frères, 1858), I, p.258: "Je flottais donc dans cette agitation d'esprit qu'excitent toujours des événements mal connus."

Meanwhile, gathered in the Gallery of Apollo, the upper chamber had already begun its deliberations by scrutinising the legality of Paul Barras's decision to resign as director, and thereby dissolve the government.[724] Discussion lingered; the Brumairians waited. When it was suggested that the defunct Directory simply be renewed, Napoleon could wait no longer. Bursting into the chamber, he announced:

> Citizens representatives, the situation in which you find yourselves is far from normal… Time is short; it is essential that you act quickly. The Republic no longer has a government. Four of the Directors have resigned; I have deemed it necessary to place the fifth under surveillance […]. There is no time to lose.

This temporally charged invocation to action was meant to corral those deputies who, during their garden perambulations, had begun to doubt the veracity of the "conspiracy" confronting the Republic. When challenged on his support for the Constitution, Napoleon snapped back: "those who speak to you of the Constitution well know that, violated at every moment, mutilated at every page, the Constitution no longer exists." In fact, continued deference for this discredited document was placing its "sacred foundations," namely the "sovereignty of the people, liberty and equality," in immediate danger – "they must be saved!"

> I repeat to you that you cannot take measures too promptly, if you wish to stop the movement which, *perhaps in an instant*, is going to kill liberty[725]

Napoleon had dismissed the legally prescribed forms of deliberating upon the vague yet imminent threats to the Republic as simply too slow.[726] Troops now filed into the Orangerie under the direction of General Murat, who casually informed the deputies that they were henceforth "dissolved." During this brief "*parenthèse militaire*," as Thierry Lentz has termed

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[724] Michael Broers, *Napoleon: Soldier of Destiny* (London, Faber and Faber, 2014), pp.224-25.

[725] *Correspondance de Napoléon 1^er^, publiée par ordre de L'Empereur Napoléon III* Correspondance no.4388, 'Discours du Général Bonaparte, au Conseil des Anciens dans la séance du 19 brumaire,' (32 vols., Paris, Henri Plon, 1861), VI, p.3-5: "Citoyens Représentants, les moments pressent; il est essentiel que vous preniez de promptes mesures. La République n'a plus de gouvernement. Quatre des directeurs ont donné leur démission; j'ai cru devoir mettre en surveillance le cinquième […]. Il n'y a pas de temps à perdre […]. Ceux qui vous parlent de la Constitution savent bien que violée à tous moments, déchirée à toutes les pages, la Constitution n'existe plus. La souveraineté du peuple, la liberté, l'égalité, ces bases sacrées de la Constitution, demeurent encore : il faut les sauver […]. Je lui répète qu'il ne peut prendre de trop promptes mesures, s'il veut arrêter le mouvement qui, dans un moment peut-être, va tuer la liberté!" Emphasis added. Interestingly, this declaration is not reproduced in the recently revised editions of the *Correspondance générale, publiée par la Fondation Napoléon* (12 vols., Paris, Fayard, 2004-12), under the direction, variously, of Thierry Lentz and Gabriel Madec.

[726] This problem was a direct inheritance of the Revolution: in 1791, Vergniaud complained to the painter Joseph Boze how, in a context of revolutionary history, the lever of the law, as guided by constituted authority, always seemed to operate too slowly: "Un nouveau ferment révolutionnaire tourmente dans sa base une organisation politique que le temps n'a pas consolidée. Ce désespoir peut en accélérer le développement avec une rapidité qui échapperait à la vigilance des autorités constituées et à l'action de la loi": in François-Alphonse Aulard, *Les grands orateurs de la Révolution: Mirabeau, Vergniaud, Danton, Robespierre* (Genève, Mégariotis, 1914), p.105; on the temporality of the law and its impact upon political legitimacy, see: Carol J. Greenhouse, 'Just in Time: Temporality and the Cultural Legitimation of Law,' *The Yale Law Journal* 98 (8, June 1989), pp.1631-51.

it, the coup became incontrovertibly illegal.[727] Yet on 19 Brumaire, the strict "legality" of proceedings was in a constant, almost minute-by-minute state of flux. Indeed, it was the temporal dimensions of the purported political crisis that enabled the Brumairians to justify the momentary transformation of a parliamentary procedure into a military manoeuvre. In order to "stop a movement which is going to kill liberty," and which could strike "in an instant," it had become necessary to subvert the law, which could not keep pace with the phantom insurrection, and thus to exchange a constitutional for a revolutionary logic of political action.[728]

When the appearance of speed seems like hurry, however, the perception of panic may derail the coup. The ratification proceedings that continued amongst the several states during 1788 can be characterised as a dispute over the temporal politics of "haste." At the Massachusetts convention, one representative, Jonathan Smith, pressed for the timely adoption of the Constitution as the only means of eradicating the lingering spectre of rural protest. If the state did not "do it now," he feared that the American people "shall never have another opportunity." If the United States did not quickly regain control over the historical forces that seemed to tear at its political cohesion and undermine its executive and legislative capacities, then it might be unable to avert its "temporal finitude." To dither and delay over such an historic matter was, as George Clymer told the Pennsylvanian convention, to "run the risk of a final ruin."[729] This sensitivity to historical temporality heightened the divergences that were coming to define Federalist and Republican politics. In a 'Letter of Caution,' the anti-Federalist Samuel Chase warned the inhabitants of Baltimore town against "*hastily*" deciding upon a question of such "consequence." The Constitution was freighted with transhistorical significance – it was a matter that involved "the future felicity of a whole people." Written in response to a petition delivered to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania calling upon the state to approve the Constitution without delay, Chase derided the need to deliberate "in a few days" on a question involving "the happiness or misery of you and all your posterity forever," as "rashness and folly." The Federalist need for speed had aroused suspicion. "[W]hen men urge you to determine in *haste*, on so momentous a subject, it is not

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[727] Thierry Lentz, *Le 18-Brumaire: les coups d'état de Napoléon Bonaparte* (Paris, Jean Picollec, 1997), p.326.
[728] Although indelibly stamped "the 18th," the coup of Brumaire was actually accomplished across four consecutive days, from the removal to Saint-Cloud on 18, to the establishment of the provisional Consulate on 20 and the adoption of a Constitution, pre-formulated by Daunou, on 21. The Constitutional Convention, by contrast, continued for more than three months. Behind the firmly closed doors and boarded up windows of Independence Hall, the secrecy and anonymity of deliberations obstructed the possible coalescence of a coherent opposition. Despite its duration, then, the delegates were able to expand the temporal possibilities of their assembly – in effect, to advance it in slow motion – by placing themselves beyond the "precipitancy" of public scrutiny. "The public mind," as Madison observed, nevertheless remained "very impatient for the event, and various reports are circulating which tend to inflame curiosity": Madison to Jefferson (18 July, 1787), in Robert A. Rutland, Charles F. Hobson, William M. E. Rachal, Frederika J. Teute, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*. Congressional Series (17 vols., Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1977), X, pp.105-06.
[729] Cited in Pauline Maier, *Ratification: The People Debate the Constitution, 1787-1788*, (New York, Simon & Schuster, 2011), p.188, 62.

unreasonable to require their motives; and it is not *uncharitable* to suspect that they are improper."[730] Similar sentiments were recreated throughout the ratifying conventions of the several states.[731] Robert Whitehill, a representative from Cumberland County in Pennsylvania, could not see the need for "driving" a federal constitution "down our throats, without an hour's preparation" – unless, of course, it was "a plan not fit for discussion." "[N]o possible mischief or inconvenience can happen from delay," concluded Chase, in a remark that would likely have bewildered Washington.[732]

Yet delay – or, rather, the insertion of duration – was to become the central time trope of the new constitutional regimes. In this sense, the proceedings of the Convention and Brumaire were paradoxical. Whilst they adhered to a revolutionary logic of extra-legal time, they simultaneously derived their legitimacy from the declared aim of stabilising revolutionary temporality. Establishing a legal-constitutional framework that would cease to operate according to revolutionary time was tantamount to declaring an end to the Revolution.

ii. The Historicity of Regimes

In a 'Letter on the Federal Constitution,' published in October 1787, Edmund Randolph extolled the virtues of the "fraternal accord" borne by revolution, before abruptly calling upon his fellow citizens to strongly suspect whether independence had guaranteed their liberties in perpetuity. "Let us discard the illusion, that by this success, and this glory, the crest of danger has irrevocably fallen." The "danger," Randolph suggested, was derived from the shallow historicity of the fledgling Republic:

> Our governments are yet too youthful to have acquired stability from habit. Our very quiet depends upon the duration of the union. Among the upright and intelligent, few can read without emotion the future fate of the States, if severed from each other.[733]

[730] Samuel Chase, 'Letter of Caution,' *The Maryland Journal* 976 (12 October, 1788), in Paul Leicester Ford, ed., *Essays on the Constitution of the United States, published during its discussion by the people 1787-1788* (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1892), pp.327-8.
[731] John R. Vile, *The Writing and Ratification of the U.S. Constitution: Practical Virtue in Action* (Lanham, MD., Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), pp.161-82; Jürgen Heideking, *The Constitution before the judgment seat: the prehistory and ratification of the American Constitution, 1787-1791* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2012).
[732] Cited in Maier, *Ratification*, p.181, 61, 62
[733] Edmund Randolph, 'Letter on the Federal Constitution, October 6, 1787' (Richmond, VA., Augustin Davis, 1787): Randolph's 'Letter' was also widely circulated amongst other newspapers and journals in Virginia; across the Atlanic, the *Gazette de Leyde* concurred, writing: "Even those political constitutions drafted with the greatest wisdom cannot, immediately after their creation, have a stability which comes from veneration and habit, and consequently comes only with time. It cannot be surprising, then, if the new American Republic experiences a few tremors before achieving such stability": cited in Jeremy D. Popkin, *News and Politics in the Age of Revolution: Jean Luzac's 'Gazette de Leyde,'* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2016), see: chapter 9.

If the binding agent of the Republic – the Union – were "severed," the future would become so troublingly open and unknowable that the "duration of the union" would become a forfeit to mere "fate." In this sense, Randolph made "stability" and "duration" synonymous, the twin outcomes of "habit," or experience, and the foundation of "our very quiet." A few months earlier, John Armstrong, a veteran of the Revolutionary War, and later a Pennsylvanian delegate to the Convention, had reached a similar conclusion. In a letter to Washington, Armstrong offered practical, experiential detail for Randolph's more theoretical musings. He predicting that the "early refusal of some of the States, to admit the Impost" – the fiscal programme that might prevent the impending financial disintegration of the Confederation – would likely "bring on ruine," and derided the Congress as "but a council of advice," an assembly devoid of authority, "whose influence daily grows less." It had become impossible "to tell how we shall be governed, when we cannot trust ourselves, or which is the same thing, the men of our own choice!" In a context where the future durability of the Union was confronted by the "daily" prospect of "ruine," it became impossible to visualise institutional longevity. The "youthful" peculiarities of recently minted political regimes connoted an absence of political experience – and the experience, in particular, of neutralising existential threats. The political crisis that had provoked the Convention was thus rooted in the shallow historicity of the Confederation: it was not possible to "gain that knowledge of Government in general [and] that species we have adopted in particular," wrote Armstrong, without the stabilising effects of historical experience; yet it was not possible to accrue the ballast of historical experience when the tempo of political life constantly abbreviated political duration. "We seem to require more Time," Armstrong concluded.[734]

Here, in short, was the purpose of constructing a new constitution: to produce "more Time" for the Republic, to enable its citizens to "gain that knowledge" essential to their own self-governance, and to ensure "the duration of the union." The belief that America, conceived under whatever constitutional carapace, required "more Time" to erect its own durability presupposed that the categories of past and future were no longer affixed in any structural, interactive historical relationship. The overwhelming sense of historical 'happening' had collapsed the prevalent regime of historicity into an event-saturated present, into "an unending now," characterised by incessant constitutional and legislative alterations.[735] In this meaningless historical melee, political power could never acquire enough time to acquire "stability from habit," subject as it was to the potential revolutionary reacceleration of history.

[734] John Armstrong to George Washington (2 March, 1787), in Abbot, *The Papers of George Washington*, The Confederation Series, V, pp.59-60.
[735] Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, p.xv.

Barely two weeks after the promulgation of the Constitution of Year VIII, the shallow historicity of the Consulate, and thus its visible political feebleness, was exposed on the floor of the Tribunat, the deliberative chamber of the new regime. The Tribunat met in the Palais-Égalité, the erstwhile Palais-Royal and the once-fashionable haunt of the French haute-bourgeoisie. It was there, at the Café du Foy on 12 July 1789, that Camille Desmoulins had urged the people of Paris to protest the dismissal of Necker, demand his recall, and adopt the tricolour cockade.[736] By 1800, the Palais-Égalité had become a synonym for vice and dissolution, a complex of brothels and gambling dens – and, as many cynics speculated, a suitable location for a chambering of chattering "lawyers," much despised by the First Consul, who hoped thereby to undermine their "deliberations."[737] Despite the debauched surroundings, memories of Desmoulins's call for patriotic fervour lingered. In a spectacularly misjudged address, delivered just fifteen days after the installation of the Tribunat, Honoré Duveyrier sought to assuage concerns that the new chamber had been intentionally planted amidst a "theatre of vice" by invoking "the generous Camille." By reminding his fellow deputies that it was upon "this spot" that "youthful liberty" had "despatched the old soldiers of the monarchy," he warned the new regime that if it "dared talk of *an idol of fifteen days*," then the representatives of the nation might "recall" how they had once "witnessed the destruction [*vit abattre*] of an idol of fifteen centuries."[738]

The speech created a sensation throughout Paris.[739] Napoleon was incensed: despite their subsequent declarations of fealty, the Tribunat – like so many of the deliberative bodies of the revolutionary decade – seemed to have misunderstood its purpose, which was to temper, not to inflame popular political energies.[740] It was becoming difficult, Napoleon later told the *Conseil d'État*, "to work with an institution so productive of disorder."[741] Duveyrier's remarks, however ill-judged, did not represent a serious threat to the legitimacy of the Consulate; rather, they exposed "the sheer visibility of the problem" of political legitimacy, a

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[736] Jacques Janssens, *Camille Desmoulins, le premier républicain de France* (Paris, Perrin, 1973), pp.1-51; Charles Armor McClelland, *The Lameths and Lafayette: The Politics of Moderation in the French Revolution, 1789-1791* (Berkeley, CA., University of California, 1942), pp.140-41; on the faded glory of the Palais-Royal, see: Robert M. Isherwood, *Farce and Fantasy: Popular Entertainment in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Oxford, OUP, 1986), ch.8; on the cockade as revolutionary symbol, see: Richard Wrigley, *The Politics of Appearances: Representations of Dress in Revolutionary France* (London, Bloomsbury Academic, 2002), pp.98-99.

[737] On Napoleon's contempt for lawyers, see: Georges Lefebvre, *Napoleon* (1935), (London, Routledge, republished: 2010), p.379.

[738] *Le Moniteur Universel*, 14 nivôse, an VIII (5 January 1800): "le noble Camille," "[O]n pourrait rappeler que la liberté jeune encore rangea les vieux soldats de la monarchie, où, si l'on osait parler d'une *idole de quinze jours*, nous rappellerons qu'on vit abattre une idole de quinze siècles."

[739] Adolphe Thiers, *History of the Consulate and the Empire of France under Napoleon* (trans. D. Forbes Campbell), (20 vols., London, Henry Colburn, 1845), I, pp.80-1.

[740] For Napoleon's response, see: Patrice Gueniffey, *Bonaparte* (trans, Steven Rendall), (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2015), pp.608-9, and Philip G. Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor: Napoleon in Power* (New Haven, CN., Yale University Press, 2013), pp.15-17; for a discussion of the legislative bodies of the Consulate and Empire, see: Irene Collins, *Napoleon and His Parliaments: 1800-1815* (London, Edward Arnold, 1979), pp.28-46; and on Napoleonic bureaucracy, see Clive H. Church, *Revolution and Red Tape: The French Ministerial Bureaucracy, 1770-1815* (Oxford, OUP, 1981), ch.8.

[741] Cited in John Holland Rose, *The Life of Napoleon* (London, George Bell & Sons, 1903), pp.319-20.

problem that, as Christopher Prendergast has illustrated, was "distinctive" to the Napoleonic regime and a stimulant to so much of its artistic and propagandistic efforts.[742] The new regime lacked historical ballast and as such it remained prey to the still-supple spontaneity of constituent power, rhetorically invoked here by Duveyrier as a force measured according to the relative historical destruction it could wreak. In post-Directorial France, the implicit, iniquitous configuration of historicity and illegitimacy suggested that, beyond irruptive force of constituent power, there could be no simultaneously legitimate *and* durable constituted authority. Impervious to ageing, "youthful liberty" operated outside the bounds of historical time, outliving constitutional government. Even if there were enough time to compress "fifteen centuries" of experience into "fifteen days," this would require an exercise of historical violence liable to undermine, not bolster consular authority.[743]

In the immediate term, the historicity of these new regimes was too shallow – and too time-poor – to be self-sustaining. The task that the Federalists and Brumairians had assigned themselves was therefore immense: they intended to create a constitutional edifice that would not only endure, but that might actually create duration. This would terminate the experience of the Confederation and Directory as a period of perpetual time-loss – the sense that there was never enough time in which to incubate political stability or verify the reliability of recent experiences. The constitutional regimes ratified in 1788 and 1799 were therefore conceived as time-creating agencies – as political timepieces, in effect – that might elongate the space of experience and stabilise history.[744]

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[742] Christopher Prendergast, *Napoleon and History Painting: Antoine-Jean Gros's La Bataille d'Eylau* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1997), p.23; Napoleon never resented debate: meetings of the *conseil d'état*, for example, were often rambunctious set-tos; rather, when the Tribunat was eventually abolished in 1807, it was the very visible nature of its debates, the public denunciations of the regime by the likes of Constant or Daunou – demagogues, Napoleon believed, who cared more for poetry of their own rhetoric than for the future of the state – that sealed its fate. See, Ellis, *The Napoleonic Empire*, p.114; as Baczko explains, the qualities of "historicity" were meant to overcome the loss of 'transparency" that dominated the Jacobin Republic, and that had ultimately contributed to its unsustainability: Bronislaw Baczko, 'Le Tournant Culturel de l'An III,' in Roger Dupuy and Marcel Morabito, *1795: Pour une République sans Révolution* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 1995), pp.17-38, here: p.21.

[743] Not coincidentally, it was during this period that the neologism "*vandalisme*" entered common political discourse. Coined by the abbé Grégoire in 1794, the contemporary, collective act of vandalism, the literal destruction of the material past, was evidence of the destructive power of the people – the efforts of "misguided hands," as Grégoire termed. It was an historically charged violence; indeed, the eradication of ancient monuments had been effect in such a brief span of time that to observe the ruination of the Revolution, the "piles of stones sullied by vandalism," was, as the architect Claude-Nicolas Ledoux wrote, like awakening "after a sleep of twelve years." Grégoire's definition of "vandalism," whilst novel, was not wholly original: see, Baczko, *Ending the Terror*, p.185-223. See, also: Richard Clay, *Iconoclasm in revolutionary Paris: the transformation of signs* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 2012), pp.205-72; Anthony Vidler, 'The Paradoxes of Vandalism: Henri Grégoire and the Thermidorian discourse on Historical Monuments,' in Jeremy D. Popkin and Richard H. Popkin, eds., *The Abbé Grégoire and his World* (Dordrecht, Kluwer Publishers, 2000), pp.129-56, here: p.129; and Rita Hermon-Belt, *L'abbé Grégoire: la politique et la vérité* (Paris, Seuil, 2000), pp.361-81.

[744] Douglas Adair, '"Experience Must Be Our Only Guide:" History, Democratic Theory, and the United States Constitution,' in Wilson Smith, ed., *Essays in American Intellectual History* (Hinsdale, IL., Dryden Press, 1975), pp.107-118; H. Trevor Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution* (1965), (Indianapolis, IN., Liberty Fund, republished: 1998).

iii. Constitutional Duration

The lifespan of the revolutionary constitution was limited. It could be drafted, altered, revised, overthrown, and reinstated as shifting political circumstances demanded. On 19 Brumaire, in his concluding address before the soon-to-be-defunct Council of Five Hundred, Lucien Bonaparte described how the "incoherent organisation" of the Constitution of Year III had "necessitated a political tremor *every year*."[745] Constitutions reflected, but were apparently incapable of regulating, the temporal politics of the revolutions that had spawned them. As Cambacérès wryly observed, the Constitution of Year VIII was "the fourth attempt at the genre in the space of ten years." In 1792, the constitution had "crumbled along with the throne that it had raised and that it was destined to support." In 1793, a further constitution "was subsumed by revolutionary government," suspended on account its incapacity to cope with the piling up of revolutionary crises. The third iteration "came to die at Saint-Cloud" – and was mourned by no one. "Few people believed in their duration," Cambacérès concluded, which was scarcely surprising, since "[g]ood laws are the work of time."[746]

For James Madison, political instability was inexplicable without this consideration of constitutional time. In his 'Vices of the Political System of the United States' (1787), he argued that the Confederation offered a failed constitutional framework because, far from securing legal and political duration, it relentlessly accumulated and discarded experience:

> Try the Codes of the several States by this test, and what a luxuriancy of legislation do they present. The short period of independency has filled as many pages as the century which preceded it. Every year, almost every session, adds a new volume.[747]

The constitutional life of the Confederation was saturated with "precipitancy," lamented Madison: "We daily see laws repealed or superseded, before any trial can have been made of their merits." Indeed, laws were made and remade in state legislatures "even before a knowledge of them can have reached the remoter districts within which they were to operate."

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[745] *Réimpression de l'Ancien Moniteur, depuis la réunion des États-Généraux jusqu'au Consulat (1789-1799)* (32 vols., Paris, Rue St-Germain, 1843) XXIX, p.896: "Cette organisation incohérente nécessite chaque année une secousse politique, et ce n'est pas pour avoir tous les ans des secousses que les peuple se donnent des constitutions." Emphasis added.

[746] Cambacérès, *Mémoires*, I, pp.448-9: "C'était la [sic] quatrième essai de ce genre dans l'espace de dix ans. La constitution de 1792 coula le 10 août avec le trône qu'elle avait relevé et qu'elle était destinée à soutenir. Celle de 1793 fut engloutie dans le gouvernement révolutionnaire. La troisième venait d'expirer à Saint-Cloud. […] Peu de personnes avaient cru à leur durée. Les bonnes lois sont l'ouvrage du temps…" On the prevalence of "constitutionalism" in popular and insurrectionary discourse, see: Peter McPhee, 'A Social Revolution? Rethinking Popular Insurrection in 1789,' in David Andress, ed., *Oxford Handbook of the French Revolution* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2015), pp.164-79.

[747] James Madison, 'Vice of the Political System of the United States; April, 1787,' in Ralph Ketcham, ed., *Selected Writings of James Madison* (Indianapolis, ID., Hackett Publishing Company, 2006), pp.35-41, here: p.39; see, also: Stephen L. Elkin, *Reconstructing the Commercial Republic: Constitutional Design after Madison* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2006), pp.74-109.

The pace of political change facilitated by the state constitutions, and by extension the Articles of Confederation, seemed to move at a higher tempo than the means by which the information relative to that political change could be disseminated or comprehended. "This may be the effect," Madison opined, "of the situation in which the revolution has placed us."[748]

The absence of constitutional duration had begun to visibly stretch the tensile strength of the Union. If a constitution could be devised that created its own time – that facilitated deliberation, vitiated democratic passions, and augmented the interval separating popular impulse and political action – then the steady accumulation of experience might transpire, and the structure of history stabilised. Greg Weiner has convincingly argued that it was James Madison, the diminutive Virginian lawyer, who conceived of the Constitution as a time-creating artefact. For Madison, the document was to function as a metronome, "setting the proper tempo for republican politics."[749] The pace of political life, which the Revolution had transformed into an *accelerando*, would be regularised through a variety of constitutional mechanisms. This amounted to a "temporal republicanism," claims Weiner, in which the natural power of time – implicitly conceived here as duration – was deployed to defuse the passion of the masses that, according to historical and classical precedent, had always decimated republics. The Constitution, at least as Madison envisaged it, would thus decelerate the speed with which impassioned majorities were formed, decompressing the period separating deliberation and action by institutionalising intervals in the political life of the Republic. The formation of stable, "reasonable" majorities was impossible within an abbreviating schema of political temporality. "If *time* be allowed for the discussion of differences," observed Priestley, "so great a majority will form one opinion," that "*reason*" would eventually interceded to "extinguish" political dispute.[750] The Constitution itself would become the guarantor of constitutional continuity.

The institutional devices of the Constitution would manufacture spaces of political experience. In Federalist No.63, Madison observed how the creation of a Senate might stretch

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[748] Madison, ibid, p.39; During the final deliberations of the Five Hundred on 19 Brumaire, Cabanis would draw similar conclusions regarding the deceased Directory: "Do the French people live at present in a real republic? Do they enjoy real liberty? Do they taste the happiness that they both assure? No! The people are not free or happy when thousands of laws, produced by the disorder of events, constantly suspends the axe above their heads…" There could be no exercise of liberty, Cabanis concluded, "when the laws and the government themselves are in a state of continual flux." This merely "feeds and anxiety and alarm in every imagination": *L'Ancien Moniteur* 52 (22 brumaire an VIII), (12 November 1800), p.897: "Le peuple français a-t-il dans l'état présent une véritable république? jouit-il d'une liberté réelle? goûte-il enfin le bonheur que l'une et l'autre doivent assurer? Non! Le peuple n'est pas libre et heureux là où des milliers de lois, produites par le désordre des événements, tiennent la hache toujours suspendue sut toutes les têtes…" "où les lois et le gouvernement lui-même sont dans un état continuel d'instabilité qui ne présente nulle garantie solide aux citoyens, et nourrit l'inquiétude et les alarmes dans toutes les imaginations."

[749] Greg Weiner, *Madison's Metronome: The constitution, majority rule, and the tempo of American politics* (Lawrence, KS., University Press of Kansas, 2012), p.4.

[750] Joseph Priestley, *Letters to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke: Occasioned by His Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, J. Johnson, 1791), pp.146-7.

those "particular moments in public affairs, when the people, stimulated by some irregular passions" may call "for measures which they themselves will afterwards be the most ready to lament." In such "critical moments," the interference of a "salutary," "temperate" and "respectable body of citizens," might "suspend the blow mediated by the people against themselves, *until* reason, justice, and truth can regain their authority of the public mind." This institutional device would therefore inject time into the Republic, guaranteeing the future sustainability of liberty by punctuating the blurry concatenation of "circumstances" and "temporary errors."[751] Government would be drained of its hypersensitivity to the immediate authority of revolutionary constituent power.[752] It would likewise contravene classical example, since, as Madison opined, had Athens possessed such an institution "[p]opular liberty might have escaped the indelible reproach of decreeing to the same citizens the hemlock on one day and statues on the next."[753] A properly constituted Senate would thus provide one mechanism for stabilising "the perpetual vibrations" that blasted out from classical precedent.[754]

Under the Articles, these defects had been reinforced by the electoral rhythms of the several states. In Connecticut and Rhode Island, for example, where representatives were elected on a bi-annual basis, the political body was so "changeable" that it was often "warped" by "momentary interest."[755] The future "reputation and prosperity of the community," Madison insisted, could only be safeguarded by an assembly "durably invested with public trust," and not by a transitory body confronted with the daily changeability of the "popular passions." The regularity of elections institutionalised the unrelenting pace of political change, but even these sometimes seemed too infrequent. During the pre-Convention period, the legislatures of the states were often disrupted by discontented crowds of

[751] On the temporality of the construction of the Federalist Papers themselves, see: Cindy Weinstein, *Time, Tense, and American Literature: When is Now?* (Cambridge, CUP, 2015), pp.36-7.
[752] Andreas Kalyvas, 'Popular Sovereignty, Democracy, and the Constituent Power,' *Constellations* 12 (2, 2005), pp.223-44; Jason Frank, *Constituent Moments: Enacting the People in Post-revolutionary America* (Durham, NC., Duke University Press, 2010), pp.67-100.
[753] James Madison, 'Federalist No.63,' in Terence Ball, ed., *The Federalist, with Letters of Brutus* (Cambridge, CUP, 2003), pp.305-12; Weiner, *Madison's Metronome*, p.48-51; Martin Diamond, 'Democracy and *The Federalist*: A Reconsideration of the Framers' Intent,' *American Political Science Review* 53 (1, 1959), pp.52-68, esp.: pp.65-66.
[754] Walter Benjamin identified the revolutionary fixation with classical history when he portrayed Robespierre's vision of historical time as "a past charged with now-time, a past which he blasted out of the continuum of history." As Andrew Jainchill has observed of the Thermidoreans, and as Madison himself noted of the Confederation era, new constitutions were to be devised in order to neutralize the "now-time" of classical precedent that ceaselessly exploded open historical continuities: see Walter Benjamin, 'On the concept of History,' in Howard Eiland, Michael W. Jennings, eds., *Selected Writings* (trans. Edmund Jephcott et al.), (4 vols., Cambridge, MA., Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), IV, pp.389-400, here: p.395.
[755] On the justifications for the use of annual elections in the Rhode Island legislature: David Sherman Lovejoy, *Rhode Island Politics and the American Revolution, 1760-1776* (Providence, RI., Brown University Press, 1958), pp.21-22.

petitioners – some of them angry mobs – demanding that deputies pass laws favourable to their cause instantly.[756]

Mid-way through the Convention, the delegates received a timely reminder of this defect. On 14 July 1787, residents of the rural towns surrounding Philadelphia congregated in the state capital for market day. When traders and bank tellers began declining paper money as an acceptable form of payment, public order very nearly collapsed. The precipitant, observed the *Pennsylvania Herald*, was the "sudden" worthlessness of paper money. "Many causes have been assigned" for "the panic, which prevailed on Saturday last," but accounting for such a "sudden event" beyond the fickle stability of paper currency seemed to evade all "rational investigation." Manipulating a depreciating currency was an easy task for "hucksters," who derived "a livelihood from the exchange between the current mediums," and who, "without any regard to the relative value" of that exchange, "keep it in constant fluctuation, and, *from day to day*, pronounce upon the rate at which paper-money shall be taken for specie." The daily alteration in the potential value of paper currencies, and the sense of constant uncertainty this created, almost provoked rioting outside the very building in which the Convention was meeting. Three days later, on 18 July, Madison wrote a panicked letter to Jefferson. When the paper money – a specious, valueless, "imaginary money" – "ceased to circulate very suddenly a few days ago," the immediate result was "stagnation," followed by the potential for violence. It was only the "timely interposition of some influential characters," and "their willingness to receive" paper as payment once more, that "prevented a riot" and "stifled the popular rage." Political order could only resume, in fact, when the people "got the paper into circulation again." This was no longer a matter of deferring debt repayments; the "sudden stagnation" of a viable circulating medium augured the disintegration of public order.[757]

For Jefferson, who observed the proceedings of the Convention from his ministerial post in Paris, erecting institutions capable of creating political duration was anathema. In one of his missives to Madison, Jefferson outlined his concept of generational sovereignty.[758]

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[756] On mob participation during the Revolutionary, Confederation and post-Convention periods, see: Gordon S. Wood, 'A Note on Mobs in the American Revolution,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 23 (4, 1966), pp.635-42; Pauline Maier, 'Popular Uprisings and Civil Authority in Eighteenth-Century America,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 27 (3, 1970), pp.3-35; Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War* (Gainesville, FL., University Press of Florida, 2001); Jeffrey S. Selinger, *Embracing Dissent: Political Violence and Party Development in the United States* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp.28-53; on female participation in violent culture, see: Susan Branson, Simon P. Newman, 'American Women and the French Revolution: Gender and Partisan Festive Culture in the Early Republic,' in William Pencak, Matthew Dennis, Simon P. Newman, eds., *Riot and Revelry in Early America* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp.229-54.

[757] These events, including Madison's letter to Jefferson, are carefully reconstructed in Weiner, *Madison's Metronome*, pp.65-6; on the fiscal and monetary reforms debated at the Convention, see: Farley Grubb, 'The US Constitution and Monetary Powers: An Analysis of the 1787 Constitutional Convention and the Constitutional Transformation of the US Monetary System,' *Financial History Review* 13 (1, 2006), pp.43-71.

[758] "Whether one generation of men has a right to bind another," Jefferson observed to Madison in September 1789, was "among the fundamental principles of every government." The belief that the earth belonged "*in*

With the passage of every generation, "every constitution and every law" had necessarily to be "extinguished," for if a constitution were to be "enforced longer," this would be "an act of force, and not of right." Under governments "wherein the will of every one has a just influence," as was the case in the Confederation, the "mass of mankind…enjoys a precious degree of liberty & happiness." And whilst it "has it's evils too," the "principal of which is the turbulence to which it is subject," it nonetheless "nourishes" and "prevents the degeneracy of government." Establishing a government premised upon an enduring framework of constitutional law was therefore illegitimate since it prevented the "ruptures" common to participatory democracy. It was for this reason, Jefferson insisted, that "a little rebellion now and then is a good thing," like a thunderstorm that pierces the oppressive atmosphere.[759] Here again, suffusing revolutionary discourse, was the belief that the expression and experience of liberty could only be realised and sustained within an ongoing present, unhampered by the hereditary claims of the past, and protected from degeneration, or simply alteration, in the future.

The opponents of the Constitution could therefore characterise this attempt to govern transhistorical time as a potential infringement of liberty. In his address 'To the Free Citizens of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,' the anti-federalist pamphleteer, John DeWitt, asked whether the Constitution was to establish "a government for a moment, a day, or a year?" "By no means," he responded, "but for all ages!" It was "not TEMPORARY, but in its nature, PERPETUAL. It is not designed that you shall be annually called, either to revise, correct or renew it; but, that your posterity shall grow up under, and be governed by it, as well as ourselves." By seeking to regulate the future "course of human events," whilst simultaneously rendering any further future intervention unnecessary, the delegates to the Convention were attempting to draw the ruptural temporality of the Revolution to an end, and thus end the Revolution entirely. In this sense, the temporality adumbrated by the Constitution was in direct conflict with the temporality of the Declaration of Independence.[760] A constitution designed for "future generations," and not merely for "the peculiar circumstances of the

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usufruct to the living," that the dead possessed "neither powers nor rights over it," and that generations to come could not be bound by the laws of today, sequestered the present from both past and future, perpetuating the revolutionary experience of unending immediacy. "No society can make a perpetual constitution, or even a perpetual law," since the present "generation" could only authorise "appropriations and establishments for *their own time*, but no longer": Jefferson to James Madison (6 September, 1789), in Charles F. Hobson, Robert A. Rutland, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, Congressional Series (17 vols., Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 1979), XII, pp.382-88; on the concept of generational sovereignty, see: Spahn, *Jefferson, Time and History*, pp.2, 3, 6, 171-76, 182; Herbert Sloan, '"The Earth Belongs in Usufruct to the Living,'" in Peter S. Onuf, ed., *Jeffersonian Legacies* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 1993), pp.281-315.

[759] Jefferson to Madison (30 January 1787), in Julian P. Boyd, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (40 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1955), XI, pp.92-97.

[760] Mikael Spång, *Constituent Power and Constitutional Order: Above, Within and Beside the Constitution* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp.12-44; David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.205-242; on Jefferson and constituent power, see: Frank, *Constituent Moments*, pp.174-75.

moment," stretched the potential constituent power of the people across such an expanse of time as to render it insensible. It was "to bind you hereafter," warned Chase, since the political institutions it contained would prevent active citizens from altering or abolishing a government *at any moment*.[761] By stabilising the "turbulence" that Jefferson believed was central to the protection of liberty, it abrogated the right – enshrined in the Declaration and essential to the Revolution – that enabled citizens to "alter or abolish" a state "*whenever* any Form of Government becomes destructive" to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In other words, it neutralised the potential "precipitancy" of popular political participation by reintegrating the present "moment" into a longer chain of historical time. The Constitution saluted the "when" of the Declaration, whilst neutralising its "whenever."[762]

The Constitution was designed to restabilise historical time by preventing the "precipitancy" of present political whims from perpetually reforming the political prospects of the future. It was for this reason that Madison would later take issue with Jefferson's desire to regularise constitutional review on the grounds that it would "in great measure deprive government of that veneration, *which time bestows on every thing*, and without which perhaps the wisest and freest governments would not possess the requisite stability."[763] The "generational" modality of political time devised by Jefferson would simply institutionalise rupture, Madison claimed, inhibiting the accumulation of historical experience, and preventing the government from producing – and thereby governing – its own time.

iv. Reordering historical time

It was in order to break the awesome power of contingency that Hamilton, in his Federalist No.34, called upon the constitutional ratifying conventions to "look forward to remote futurity." It was foolish "to confine our view to the present period," he pleaded: "There ought to be a CAPACITY to provide for future contingencies, as they may happen." Thus the Constitution, which was not "framed upon a calculation of existing exigencies, but upon a combination of these with the probable exigencies of ages, according to the natural and tried course of human affairs," offered the real possibility of reordering historical time.[764] As a

[761] Chase, 'Letter of Caution,' p.328.
[762] On the temporal semantics of the Constitution, the Declaration and the Federalist Papers, see: Nicholas Rombes, 'Speculative Discourse: Uses of the Future in the Declaration, The Federalist Papers, Jefferson and Paine,' in Arthur Robert Lee, W. M. Verhoeven, eds., *Making America, Making American Literature: Franklin to Cooper* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1996), pp.77-92; Elizabeth M. Renker, '"Declaration-Men" and the Rhetoric of Self-Presentation,' *Early American Literature* 24 (2, 1989), pp.120-34.
[763] Jefferson wanted to overhaul the Constitution every 19-years, see: Jefferson to Madison (6 September, 1789), in Hobson, Rutland, eds., *The Papers of James Madison*, XII, pp.382-88; in a letter to Samuel Kercheval in 1816, Jefferson reiterated his demand for constitutional review, in J. Jefferson Looney, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Retirement Series (10 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2013), X, pp.222-28.
[764] Hamilton, 'Federalist No.34,' in Ball, ed., *The Federalist*, p.153.

political document, an artefact of power imprinted with the "tried course" of past "affairs," but built to withstand the "exigencies" of forthcoming "ages," it was time-proof.[765]

The proclamation issued by the Council of Five Hundred on 19 Brumaire (10 November) made similar claims for the new Consular regime. Whilst the "constitutional regime" of the Directory "was only a succession of revolutions," which had left "the most sacred rights" of liberty and equality "exposed to all the caprices of factions and events," henceforth liberty would find "refuge in the arms of a constitution which promises it some repose."[766] Creating this "repose," of course, could not be a present-oriented undertaking: the Directory and the Confederation had been reactive regimes, confronted by an accelerated stream of historical time in which there could be no preparation for, or pre-emption of, the unforeseen. As James Wilson instructed his fellow Convention delegates: "we are providing a Constitution for future generations, and not merely for the peculiar circumstances of the moment." Merely regulating "existing exigencies," as Hamilton characterised the Confederation, was to fundamentally misdirect constitutional energy, since this would turn legislative and executive activity into an always-already too-late concoction of out-of-date solutions.[767] The purpose of civil governance was to regulate "the probable exigencies" to come, which ultimately meant making the unforeseeable foreseeable.

Whilst the constitution ratification process was subject to criticism, the plebiscite on the Constitution of Year VIII, undertaken in December 1799, was farcically undemocratic.[768] The figures were undeniably fiddled by Lucien – but this did not render the *impression* created by the vote illegitimate. Never mind the staggering abstention rates; for the tribunes Jean-Baptiste de Champagny and Jacques-André Émery, it was the social make-up of those who *had* supported the new regime that mattered most.[769] According to their calculations, the most enthusiastic approval for the Consulate had come from "that concerned class of fathers [*classe intéressante de pères*] who, living in the future even more than in the present, wanted a government to protect the present and guarantee the future."[770] The purpose of the plebiscite – and the retroactive purpose of the coup – was the stabilisation of history. Little more than a

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[765] On Hamilton's keen appreciation of "duration" as a central function of the new Constitution, see: Harvey Flaumenhaft, *The Effective Republic: Administration and Constitution in the Thought of Alexander Hamilton* (Durham, NC., Duke University Press, 1992), pp.133-57.

[766] "Frenchmen! Once more, the Republic has *just escaped* the violence of rebels," the proclamation began, invoking a common frustration with contingent time: 'Proclamation of the Council of Five Hundred, 19 Brumaire VIII (10 November 1799),' in John Stewart Hall, *A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution* (New York, NY., Macmillan, 1951), pp.765-67, here: p.766.

[767] Alexander Hamilton, 'Federalist No.34,' in Ball, ed., *The Federalist*, p.153.

[768] The discovery of electoral fraud was made by Claude Langlois, 'Le Plébiscite de l'an VIII ou le coup d'État du 18 pluviôse an VIII,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 207 (1972), pp.43-65.

[769] In Marseilles, with a population of more than 100,000, barely 1,200 citizens voted: Steven Englund, *Napoleon: A Political Life* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2004), p.485.

[770] M. J. Mavidal, M. E. Laurent, eds., *Archives Parlementaires de 1787 à 1860, Recueil complet des débats législatifs & politiques des chambres françaises*. Second series (127 vols., Paris, P. Dupont, 1862-1913), I, pp.177-180: "cette classe intéressante de pères de famille qui, vivant dans l'avenir plus encore que dans le présent, voulaient un gouvernement conservateur du présent et garant de l'avenir."

year after Brumaire, however, and the "guarantee" of future order was once again in unexpected doubt. On 3 Nivôse Year IX, Christmas Eve, 1800, as the First Consul was journeying to the opera, his carriage was struck by an incendiary device, which killed several bystanders and sent instant alarm through the city.[771] Despite clear evidence linking royalist agitators to the so-called *machine infernale*, Napoleon – in a pique of paranoia – chose instead to locate the plot within a narrative of revolutionary violence.[772] The attempt upon both his life and the new regime was the work of "*septembriseurs*," he insisted, who had been "in permanent conspiracy, in open rebellion," against "each succeeding government."[773] This prototype terrorist attack was comprehensible as a revolutionary event. Its unforeseen quality – "a crime without any historical example," claimed Napoleon – was clearly designed to once again explode open the question of legitimate authority, an extra-constitutional bid to return the Republic to the churning sense of historical 'happening' that had done for the Directory. The perpetrators, as one justice of the peace from l'Aude observed, were attempting to "bring back the days of mourning and desolation," to "plunge us back into the horrors of anarchy."[774] The new regime would seek to repress further rupture in political authority by reintegrating the past, present and future of the Republic. Days after the assassination attempt, Joseph Fouché, the minister of police, outlined the purpose of public safety and surveillance. On a sheet of government paper – upon which the original heading '*Au Directoire Exécutif*' is scratched over with the words, '*Rapport aux Consuls*,' as though to underline the period as a time of ongoing regime transfer – he declared:

> Today, it is not only about punishing the past, but guaranteeing all social order for the present and for the future. It is about saving the state and transmitting the Republic across the generations to come – reassured, purified, honoured.[775]

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[771] On the so-called *machine infernale* plot, see: Henri Gaubert, *Conspirateurs au temps de Napoléon I^er^* (Paris, Flammarion, 1962), p.160; Michael J. Sydenham, 'The Crime of 3 Nivôse (24 December 1800),' in John Bosher, ed., *French Government and Society, 1500-1800: Essays in Memory of Alfred Cobban* (London, Athlone Press, 1973), pp.295-320.

[772] The assassination attempt was organised by a gang of Breton royalists, named *chouans*, led by the redoubtable figure of Georges Cadoudal; see: Patrick Huchet, *George Cadoudal et les Chouans* (Brittany, Editions Ouest-France, 1998), p.331.

[773] Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, p.61; Dwyer further demonstrates that the "politics of national reconciliation" pursued in the immediate aftermath of Brumaire was ineffective, and that it was only institutional reform, pursued after the peace of Amiens in 1801, and not merely political involvement in revolutionary dispute, that eased partisan tensions: p.63.

[774] Cited in Karine Salomé, 'L'attentat de la rue Nicaise en 1800: l'irruption d'une violence inédite?' in *Revue d'histoire du XIX^e^ siècle* 40 (2010), pp.59-75, here: p.74: "faire renaître les jours de deuil et de désolation," "nous replonger dans toutes les horreurs de l'anarchie."

[775] AN. AF/IV/1302: 'Extrait des Registres des délibérations des Consuls de la République (Paris, le 14 nivôse, an 9). Rapport aux Consuls par le ministère de la police.': "Il ne s'agit pas seulement aujourd'hui de punir le passé, mais de garantir tout l'ordre social pour le présente & pour l'avenir. Il s'agit de sauver l'état et de transmettre la république aux générations qui s'avancent – rassurée, épurée, honorée." See: Beatrice de Graaf, Marieke de Goede, 'Sentencing Risk. Temporality and Precaution in Terrorism Trials,' *International Political Sociology* 7 (3, 103), pp.313-31.

By finally "terminating" the "atrocious war" raging between various factions, the past of the Revolution could be reconciled with its present and reintegrated into the future. The Consulate would reorder the chain of historical time and re-impose continuity by bringing the past, present and future of the state back into a structural relationship, "transmitting the Republic across the generations to come."[776]

A desire for "generational" – or transhistorical – interconnection was a common theme of the Convention. During a debate on the potential strength of the nascent western states, and the possibility that they might one day overpower the founding states, Roger Sherman of Connecticut reminded his fellow delegates that, "We are providing for our posterity, for our children & our grand Children, who would be as likely to be citizens of new Western States, as of the old States."[777] The system and structure of federal government would glance deep into "futurity," an ambition that understandably unnerved many anti-Federalists who, adhering to a nascent form of "generational sovereignty," reeled at the prospect that the present might dictate the terms of the future. Michael Lienesch, paraphrasing Pocock, points to the Convention as a moment when American revolutionaries "took up the unprecedented task of transcending time," reaching "beyond precedent to create a present-oriented politics."[778] It is more likely that the framers of the Constitution, like the perpetrators of Brumaire, embraced a future-oriented politics, basing their deliberations on a fixation with the unnerving openness of near- to long-term history, as well as a general suspicion of the reliability and shelf-life of recent historical experience.

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The French Revolution came to a formal end at approximately 3am on the morning of 19 Brumaire.[779] In his final address to the Council of Five Hundred – which, during its twilight session, had been reduced to a rump quorum of thirty – Lucien began narrating the passage of events in an unusual tense, the present-historic, almost as though the *histoire* – quite literally, the story – of the Revolution were concluding before his eyes. "Representatives of the people, French liberty was born in the Jeu de Paume at Versailles. Since then…it had laboured along as far as you, prey by turns to thoughtlessness, weakness, and the convulsive disorders of

[776] In some sense, this represents a temporalised version of what Michael Broers has termed *amalgame*, the Napoleonic politics of fusion, characterised by a conscious effort of "bringing together old adversaries within [new] institutions": *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796-1814: Cultural Imperialism in a European Context?* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.124.
[777] Frank Harmon Garver, 'The Attitude of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 toward the West,' *Pacific Historical Review* 5 (4, December 1936), pp.349-58.
[778] Lienesch, in *New Order of the Ages*, finds the Convention to be the pre-eminent "Machiavellian moment" in American history, p.119.
[779] As the declaration of the plebiscite results, delivered on 15 December 1799, announced: "Citizens! The Revolution has remained faithful to the principles from which it sprang. It is now at an end": p.11.

infancy." The Revolution could be declared concluded because, as Lucien observed, "[a]ll the convulsions of liberty have come to an end today." Liberty had been guaranteed by Brumaire – and the future would attest to the fact: "Listen to posterity's cry: if liberty was born in a tennis court at Versailles, it was consolidated in the Orangerie at Saint-Cloud."[780] The Revolution was over.

The Brumairians, like the Federalists, traded in a rhetorical vocabulary freighted with temporality because, in an attempt to justify their undertakings, they sought to make the establishment and verification of political legitimacy coterminous with the ending of the temporal chaos that marred the Directory and Confederation. However, the theoretical constitutional capacity of these new regimes to create their own time – to create "more Time" – was untried in practice. The task of transforming a rhetorical legitimacy derived from political urgency, which had justified the interventions at Philadelphia and St Cloud, into a practical legitimacy premised upon the experience of constitutional durability – the duration in which political experience could be safely incubated – was incomplete.[781] Quelling the pulsations of politics would fall to the post-revolutionary regimes of George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte.

[780] Gueniffey, *Bonaparte*, p.572.
[781] For the post-Convention debates on the legitimacy of the new Constitution, with particular reference to temporal consciousness, see: Lienesch, *New Order of the Ages*, pp.159-83.

5: The Washington Administration, 1789-1796 the Napoleonic Empire, 1800-1815, and the Legitimacy of Temporal Manipulation

Under the Articles of Confederation and the Directory, the practice of power became dependent upon "the capacity to act in response to contingency." Their institutional structures and political cultures, meanwhile, entailed "a continuous capacity for action rather than a continuous transmission of legitimacy."[782] What the Napoleonic regime and Washington administration therefore attempted to do was to extricate America and France from an historically conditioned existence, from an experience of history that affected daily, even hourly preoccupations. These regimes nevertheless remained precariously established, having rejected the ephemerality of revolutionary legitimacy, but as yet incapable of pointing to a durable historicity. Through a variety of performative and rhetorical strategies, Washington and Napoleon created a buffer time – *meantime* – that, by providing a form of artificial duration, would enable recent institutional innovations to endure. Howsoever adept their capacity for duration-creation, the institutions of the Constitution or *Conseil d'État*, for example, would require an incubation period.

This task was undermined by the territorial entities that Washington and Napoleon governed, which were not merely spatially unstable, expanding or contracting according to the vicissitudes of migration or warfare – they were also temporally unstable. These empires – the Napoleonic and the American "Empire of Liberty" – were a concoction of divergent, space-specific historicities, where the texture and tempo of history – its lived experience – varied, unbound by any notion of absolute temporal uniformity.[783] In other words, they were subdivided not by interstitial time zones, but by incoherent, overlapping zones of time. This heterotemporality produced an uneven – and often ungovernable – distribution of political interest and sentiments, which contributed towards a series of crises, from the Pennsylvanian Whiskey Rebellion in 1794 to the perilous administration of the satellite kingdoms established by Napoleon after the victory of Austerlitz in 1805. The incompatible dynamics of

[782] Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time,' p.92; on early-nineteenth century interpretations of chance, see: Theresa M. Kelley, 'Romantic Temporality, Contingency, and Mary Shelley,' *ELH* 75 (3, Autumn 2008), pp.625-52.

[783] On the notion of the American "Empire of Liberty," see: Peter S. Onuf, *Jefferson's Empire: The Language of American Nationhood* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2000), pp.53-79; Robert W. Tucker, David C. Henderson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford, OUP, 1992), pp.157-74; Francis D. Cogliano, *Emperor of Liberty: Thomas Jefferson's Foreign Policy* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 2014), esp. ch.6; in Jefferson's Empire, "the purpose of power," writes Roger Kaplan, is "not power itself; it is a fundamentally liberal purpose of sustaining the key characteristics of an orderly world": 'Violent Belonging and the Question of Empire Today,' *American Quarterly* 56 (1, March 2004), pp.1-18, here: p.5; Jared Orsi, 'An Empire and Ecology of Liberty,' in Matthew L. Harris, Jay H. Buckley, *Zebulon Pike, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West* (Norman, OK., University of Oklahoma Press, 2012), pp.139-60; Reginald Horsman, 'The Dimensions of an "Empire of Liberty": Expansionism and Republicanism,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 9 (1, Spring 1989), pp.1-20; François Furstenberg, 'The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History,' *American Historical Review* 113 (2008), pp.647-77.

these zones of time rendered the complexion of legitimacy kaleidoscopic.[784] Different spaces were capable of displaying or carrying different dynamics or perceptions of time: historical time at the "periphery" – which, in this context, might mean the western frontier, for example, or the rural reaches of the Italian peninsula – could move slower or faster; it could seem somehow freighted with an overwhelming weight or accelerate under the slightest impulse. In America, these zones of time would provide the intellectual underlay of the Louisiana Purchase and the Jeffersonian vision of spatial aggrandisement, in turn dictating the entire discursive framework of ante-bellum historical time in the United States.[785] The expanding scope of these Empires stretched their circulation speeds: communication, information, transportation, migration – everything transpired at an unpredictable tempo, investing daily life with a randomness, a sense of haphazardness. The application of political power had to confront the non-simultaneity, the incommensurability of political dangers. The overarching historicities of these regimes – still dependent, as Washington observed during his Farewell Address of 1796, upon "yet recent institutions" – continued to be threatened, even as they "matured" in meantime, by the prevalence of chance.

I. Haphazard Empires

In January 1787, the Scottish clergyman Charles Nisbet portrayed America as a Republic saturated by chance. Nisbet, who was appointed as the first Principal of Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, arrived during the sweltering midsummer heat of 1785, whereupon his children immediately contracted a fever, a consequence of the proximity of the family home to a swamp. Life in the nascent United States, Nisbet observed, was governed by an

[784] The use of an "imperial" vocabulary is valuable in this context since, as Peter Osborne has elsewhere observed, the conceptualisation of the colony was a constitutive element in the construction of the consciousness of modern time: through "a dual process of the transcoding of immanently European temporal differences ('revolution') and colonial spatial differences ('the colonies')," there emerged a "geopolitical spatialisation of temporal differences and a temporalisation of spatialised colonial differences": Peter Osborne, 'Global Modernity and the Contemporary: Two Categories of the Philosophy of Historical Time,' in Lorenz and Bevernage, eds., *Breaking Up Time*, pp.69-86, here: p.75; and, Lauren Benton, *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400-1900* (Cambridge, CUP, 2010); if the "dynamism of modernity" is derived from "the separation of time and space and their recombination in forms which permit the precise time-space 'zoning' of social life," then the Napoleonic and (early) American Empires appear trapped in time – no longer early modern but not yet modern either; they were conditioned, even defined by historical flux: Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1990), pp.16-17; this spatiotemporal reality is what made the Revolutions modern, and what made these "empires" revolutionary: see, Perovic, *The Calendar*, p.123: "the calendar demonstrates to what extent the French Republic first appeared not in or as space, whether as a bounded territory or as the presence of a unified people, but on the order of time, as the new imagined totality that would foreclose any future disruptions of history."

[784] Unlike "hazard," which merely connotes the presence of risk or danger, I prefer the term "haphazard," which is more evocative of chance as well as the temporal disorder inherent to the perception of randomness; in colonial context, see: Joseph Fichtelberg, *Risk Culture: Performance & Danger in Early America* (Ann Arbor, MI., University of Michigan Press, 2010).

[785] See, *passim*, Major L. Wilson, 'The Concept of Time and the Political Dialogue in the United States, 1828-48,' *American Quarterly* 19 (4, Winter 1967), pp.619-44, and *Space, Time, and Freedom: The Quest for Nationality and the Irrepressible Conflict, 1815-1861* (Westport, CT., Greewood Press, 1974).

unpredictable randomness – by haphazardness.[786] On 10 January, he wrote to a friend back in Scotland:

> As this new world is unfortunately composed…of discordant atoms, jumbled together by chance, and tossed by unconstancy in an immense vacuum, it greatly wants a principle of attraction and cohesion. Such may come in time, but it has not yet taken place.

What seemed to characterise "the fate of this country," Nisbet concluded, was "uncertainty." Nothing could be taken for granted since nothing seemed to endure for any length of time. The variables of life fizzed and collided, constantly producing new and unforeseen situations, which, no sooner had they formed, seemed to dissolve once more into the "immense vacuum." A sense of certainty might "come in time," but the prevailing sense of uncertainty prevented any rational prediction of the intervening duration. "Some people are beginning to think, and I hope better times are approaching. […] But things must go on slowly."[787]

Ensuring the principles of "attraction and cohesion" across such a vast, unwieldy and ever-shifting territory was problematic. The first major turnpike road, which connected Philadelphia to Lancaster, was not completed until 1795, and America possessed fewer than one hundred miles of canals before the early nineteenth century.[788] Such a rudimentary infrastructure network did not merely inhibit commercial activity, however; it drastically delayed the circulation of information.[789] "Yours, of the 9th of August," Nisbet complained to his correspondent, "reached Philadelphia on the 22d of November, but did not reach me for three weeks afterwards, as we have no post yet established on this road." The geographic scope and climatological extremes – "communication is difficult this hard winter" – of the new Republic further exacerbated the dissemination of news: "I imagine that the want of genius among our news-writers, and the barrenness of events in our papers, are likewise

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[786] Unlike "hazard," which merely connotes the presence of risk or danger, I prefer the term "haphazard," which is more evocative of chance as well as the temporal disorder inherent to the perception of randomness; in colonial context, see: Joseph Fichtelberg, *Risk Culture: Performance & Danger in Early America* (Ann Arbor, MI., University of Michigan Press, 2010).

[787] Samuel Miller, ed., *Memoir of the Rev. Charles Nisbet, D. D., Late President of Dickson College, Carlisle* (New York, NY., Robert Carter, 1840), p.167, 170-71, 175.

[788] Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, p.482; on turnpike road building during the early Republic, see: Charles I. Landis, 'Philadelphia and Lancaster Turnpike: The first long turnpike in the United States,' *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 42 (1918), pp.1-28; Robert F. Hunter, 'Turnpike Construction in Antebellum Virginia,' *Technology and Culture* 4 (1963), pp.177-200; George R. Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York, N.Y. M. E. Sharpe, 1951), pp.22-24; Eugene S. Ferguson has asked whether American transportation builders, unlike their European counterparts, operated according to a "doctrine of imperfectability," in which they were ready to enhance the speed of the creation of communication networks even if those networks were "imperfectly" erected: 'On the Origin and Development of American Mechanical know-how,' *Mid-Continent American Studies Journal* 3 (1962), pp.3-16.

[789] Richard B. Kleibowicz, 'The Press, the Post Office, and the Flow of News in the Early Republic,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 3 (3, Autumn, 1983), pp.255-280; Joseph M. Adelman, '"A Constitutional Conveyance of Intelligence, Public and Private": The Post Office, the Business of Printing, and the American Revolution,' *Enterprise & Society* 11 (4, December, 2010), pp.711-754.

partial causes of that stagnation of the human faculties which prevails in this country; as well as the want of cross posts, and readiness of communication."[790]

As an emigrant to the fledgling United States Nisbet considered himself "as engaged, with others, in the inglorious but useful labour of digging under ground, and laying the foundation of a building that may rise and make some figure in another age."[791] The task of establishing the Republic is here conceived as a process in time – a "useful labour" – whose duration, which "must go on slowly," ties the present in steady diachronic lockstep to the future – "another age" – for which it naturally provides the "foundation." The gradualism and linearity of this transhistoricity stabilised – and thereby legitimised – human endeavours, such as the exercise of political power, in the present because it drained the future of its unforeseen properties, and thus lessened the possibility of sudden, irruptive change.

A sense of transhistorical stability was undermined by the appearance of chance, which, in temporal terms, may be conceived as "a pure category of the present." As Koselleck observes, chance "cannot be derived from a horizon of future expectation, except as its sudden manifestation; neither is it possible to experience it as the outcome of past causes: for if this were possible, then it would no longer be chance." Suited solely to "the startling, the new, the unforeseen," a regime of chance imbued the present with the sort of haphazardness that Nisbet considered characteristic of the early American Republic. As an essentially ahistorical category, impervious to past precedent and antithetical to future prediction, chance indicated "an inadequate consistency of given conditions," and "an incommensurability in their results."[792] It frustrated decision-making processes, already upended by revolution.

Although the Convention of 1787 had provided America with a constitution, a political "metronome" seemingly imbued with the capacities for regulating historical time, the republic continued to be confronted by "unconstancy," "uncertainty," and – above all – by "chance."[793] Despite the desire – articulated on a micro-scale in Nisbet's letter – of "creating its own time," the United States could never gain enough time in which to fulfil this imperative. The pace of change was incessant. "It is a country entirely in flux," observed the duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt during his thirty-three month journey, undertaken

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[790] Miller, ed., *Memoir of the Rev. Charles Nisbet*, p.174; Richard D. Brown, *Knowledge is Power: The Diffusion of Information in Early America, 1700-1865* (Oxford, OUP, 1989), pp.110-31; the trials of life at the frontier are neatly summarised in, Jonathan Atkins, *From Confederation to Nation: The Early American Republic, 1789-1848* (London, Routledge, 2016), pp.33-37.

[791] Miller, *Memoir of the Rev. Charles Nisbet*, p.174; on the categorisation of citizens and inward migratns in the early Republic, see: Kunal Parker, *Making Foreigners: Immigration and Citizenship Law in America, 1600-200* (Cambridge, CUP, 2015), pp.22-80, and Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1999).

[792] Reinhardt Koselleck, 'Chance as motivational trace in historical writing,' in *Futures Past*, pp.115-27, here: p.115-16.

[793] David Brian Robertson, *The Constitution and America's Destiny* (Cambridge, CUP, 2005); Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York, NY., Penguin, 2006).

between 1795 and 1797, throughout the new nation: "that which is true today regarding its population, its establishments, its prices, its commerce, was not so six months ago, and will not be so six months from now." Indeed, the information that he had collected "in the present period" would very soon be rendered into little more than "sites of memory."[794] The consequences of this economic and demographic change, of course, were entirely aleatory. The expansion of this "infant empire," observed Washington, also stretched the predictive capacities of the newly constituted federal government. If, as he "candidly" confessed to George Plater, he could "foresee no evil greater than disunion," then the multidirectional movement and unregulated rhythm of territorial expansion continually enrolled new and unfamiliar hazards into the core of the Union. Washington looked out upon the western frontier as a kaleidoscope of ever-shifting dangers. With "the flanks and rear of the united territory" possessed "by other powers, and formidable ones," the geopolitical sympathies and interests of the western settlers remained in a state of constant doubt. "For what ties let me ask, should we have upon those people," he wrote in his diary, "if Spaniards on their right, or Great Britain on their left, instead of throwing stumbling blocks in their way as they now do, should invite their trade and seek alliances with them?" Under these conditions, the western expansion of the "rising" empire was directly proportional to the accumulation of risk. The dimension of chance inherent in such territorial fluctuation was the possibility that, at any moment, the Union might fracture at its fringes. "The western settlers stand as it were on a pivet – the touch of a feather would almost incline them any way."[795] Even the most innocuous occurrence could tip the "pivet" and, at an instant, plunge the Republic into crisis. It was the constant incalculability of the hazards radiating from the frontier, encouraged by "the spirit of adventure" and the instability of political loyalties, which, as Henry Knox observed in 1787, made "the dangers of usurpation on a large scale *extremely imminent*."[796]

The primitive communication and transportation routes of the empire could not keep pace with its spatial enlargement. In 1789, Washington presided over a nation that barely possessed a road network; mail shots, including government decrees, were often delayed or

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[794] François Alexandre Frédéric, duc de la Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyages dans les États-Unis d'Amérique, fait en 1795, 1796, et 1797* (10 vols., Paris, 1799), I, p.xi: "C'est un pays tout en croissance; ce qui est vrai aujourd'hui pour sa population, ses établissemens, ses prix, son commerce, ne l'était pas il y a six mois, et ne le sera plus six mois plus tard." On the impact these impressions had upon young French nobles and others, see: François Furet, 'De L'Homme sauvage à l'homme historique: L'expérience américaine dans la société française,' *Annales ESC* 4 (August 1978), pp.729-39; Lucy M. Gidney, *L'Influence des États-Unis d'Amérique sur Brissot, Condorcet, et Madame Roland* (Paris, Éditions Rieder, 1930); Allan Potofsky, 'French *Lumières* and American Enlightenment during the Atlantic Revolution,' *Revue Française d'Études Americaines* 92 (May 2002), pp.47-63.

[795] George Washington to George Plater (25 October, 1784), in Abbott, ed. *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, II, pp.108-10; on Washington and the frontier, see: Warren R. Hofstra, *George Washington and the Virginia Backcountry* (Madison, WI., Madison House, 1998) and Hugh Cleland, *George Washington in the Ohio Valley* (Pittsburgh, PA., Pittsburgh University Press, 1956), pp.273-332.

[796] Andrew Robert Lee Cayton, *The Frontier Republic: Ideology and Politics in the Ohio Country, 1780-1825* (Kent, OH., Kent State University Press, 1986), p.23.

simply lost altogether; a bureaucracy barely existed.[797] It was only after the passage of the Post Office Act in 1792, for example, that Congress properly designed national postal routes.[798] If the purpose of "wisdom & patriotism," as Washington had observed shortly before the Constitutional Convention, was "[t]o anticipate & prevent disasterous contingencies," then the absence of duration in any part of American life made political predictions impossible, leaving the orderly governance prey to precisely the sort of unforeseen hazards that the Convention was meant to obviate.[799] In order to ensure the territorial integrity of the existing Union, instability at the periphery would need to be eliminated; the completion of commercial routes, such as canals, would tip the "pivet" towards the seaboard states, binding the "interests" of the settler communities to the centre, and thereby lessening the likelihood that the "touch of a feather" would precipitate sudden disintegration.[800]

The western frontier was thus a conduit for rapid change – but it was not conducive of unilinear historical progress.[801] As Talleyrand and Crèvecœur had observed, the new territories contributed to the perception of temporal acceleration whilst simultaneously conveying the appearance of historical retrogression: vast tracts of untrammelled land suddenly began churning under the weight of wagon trains; and yet the rusticity and rurality of the proliferating settlements suggested that time was processing in reverse. Spatial expansion was deranging the uniform temporality of the Republic, producing pockets of diverse, often mutually exclusive "interests." For Washington, the continued unchecked pace of territorial growth contravened what would become the central contention of his Farewell Address of 1796: namely, that America should travel as a unity through time.[802]

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[797] William B. Warner, *Protocols of Liberty: Communication Innovation and the American Revolution* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp.194-226, 266-72.
[798] Richard R. John, *Spreading the News: The American Postal System from Franklin to Morse* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1995), p.42-53.
[799] George Washington to John Jay (15 August, 1786), in Abbott, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, IV, p.213.
[800] These ideas were formed in Washington's imagination as a young men, when, during the French and Indian War of 1754-63: "That the greater Union of the future was menaced by the Alleghany barrier he saw while still a lad and a loyal English subject," observed John Corbin, "and to the end of his life he dreamed of binding the new West to the seaboard States by the strong ties of commerce": John Corbin, *The Unknown Washington: Biographic Origins of the Republic* (New York, NY., Charles Scribner's Sons, 1930), p.314.
[801] Max M. Edling, 'Consolidating a Revolutionary Republic,' in Andrew Shankman, ed., *The World of the Revolutionary American Republic: Land, Labor, and the Conflict for the Continent* (London, Routledge, 2014), pp.165-94.
[802] "The unity of government which constitutes you one people," Washington warned in his Farewell Address of 19 September, 1796, "is also now dear to you. It is justly so, for it is a main pillar in the edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home, your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is *easy to foresee* that, from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is *of infinite moment* that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national union to your collective and individual happiness…": George Washington, 'Farewell Address' (19 September, 1796), in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. *The Writings of George Washington* (39 vols., Washington DC., United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44), XXXV, pp.214-38, here: pp.218-19.

Consequently, Washington advised against any further negotiation with Spain concerning navigational rights over the Mississippi River. It ought to be "no object with us," he remarked: "On the contrary, until we have a little time allowed to open and make easy the ways between the Atlantic states and the western territory, the obstruction had better remain."[803] The distinct zones would first need to reach a degree of developmental homogeneity before the Union could withstand further territorial enlargement. The fluvial "obstruction" of the Mississippi inserted a natural de-abbreviation – "a little time" – into the progress of this enlargement, which might enable the political infrastructure of the federal government to catch up, to "make easy the ways" that connected the commercial and informational networks of the nation.

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"No period of war has been so astonishing as the present," declared the *Morning Post* in June 1800, "at no time have we felt ourselves so unable to develop the views of the enemy, to reconcile their movements with common prudence and common sense." Following the disastrous campaigns of the Directory, France mounted an unexpected turnaround; in May, as General Moreau advanced across the Rhine, repulsing an enormous Austrian army, Napoleon swept over the Alps, decimating the Austrians at Marengo.[804] Such astounding military manoeuvres, the *Post* concluded, had simply "overset all our speculations."

In Europe, like in America, it was the conquest of territory that seemed to imbue life with such haphazardness. The nature of that conquest, however, differed from the settlement of undisturbed land: unlike the migration across the western frontier, warfare on a hitherto unimagined scale engulfed Europe.[805] "No other human activity," observed the Prussian military theorist, Carl von Clausewitz, "is so continuously or universally bound up with chance." And "through the element of chance, guesswork and luck come to play a great part in war."[806] The cataclysmic scale and pace of Napoleonic warfare altered the status of knowledge itself, overturning the "operational logic" of political life and undermining the

[803] George Washington to Richard Henry Lee (22 August, 1785), in Abbott, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*. Confederation Series, III, p.196.
[804] T. C. W. Blanning, *The French Revolutionary Wars, 1787-1802* (London, Arnold, 1996), pp.41-60; David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York, NY., Macmillan, 1966); David A. Bell, *The First Total War* (New York, NY., Houghton Mifflin, 2007), pp.226-27.
[805] David A. Bell, *The First Total War* (New York, NY., Houghton Mifflin, 2007), pp.263-301; Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Armée, guerre, et société à l'époque napoléonienne. Actes du colloques organisé par l'Institut Napoléon et la Bibliothèque Marmottan les 17 et 18 novembre 2000* (Paris, Institue Napoléon, Éditions SPM, 2004); Jean-Paul Vertaud, *Quand les enfants parlaient de gloire: l'Armée au cœur de la France de Napoléon* (Paris, Aubier, 2006).
[806] Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (trans. Michael Howard, Peter Paret), (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1984), p.85.

predictive faculties of the early modern state in the process.[807] It infected political calculation, as Clausewitz famously observed, since "chance makes everything more uncertain and interferes with the whole course of events."[808] Whereas Frederick II could confidently claim that "luck and chance" were merely "empty words" obscuring explicable occurrences as yet possessed of knowable causes, given the unlimited scope of Napoleonic warfare, there were now "so many concatenations of circumstances with fortuitous events" that it was unclear whether causes or consequences could ever be certifiable identified.[809]

On the battlefields and inside the state councils of Europe, epistemic conditions degraded.[810] War no longer entailed the limited possibilities of territorial reorganisation; it now risked the total decimation of states and a rupture in the historical identities that they sustained. As Friedrich von Gentz observed, Napoleon's campaigns had thrust the newly created German Confederation into a vortex of randomly arising events, governed by the unpredictable variables of "military probabilities." The monarchy of Franz I, already downgraded by the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806, confronted a completely open, temporally unstable future.[811] "The idea of peace, of any sort of peace, makes me shudder," Gentz wrote in November, 1809; "but the idea of the final destruction of this monarchy – an event which could be realised in fewer than two months, and which would deprive us of the totality of the future, after which even a resurrection would become impossible, – this is what overwhelms me, wracks me, devastates me!"[812] The advent of "final destruction" could be seen to happen at such an intensified speed because the geometric limitations of warfare had been overturned. Whereas eighteenth century armies could not outpace the movement of their operational base without also breaking their provision lines, during the Revolutionary and Napoleonic era, requisitioning practices were completely overhauled. Soldiers were instructed to forage for food, to liberate the army from the fixed

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[807] Anders Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of Chance: The Napoleonic Wars and the Disorder of Things* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2015), p.3.
[808] Clausewitz, *On War*, p.101.
[809] Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of Chance*, p.52; Koselleck writes that, according to this world, a type of "punctual chance" appears, which is "revealed to be a bundle of causes, it becomes a pure name without reality": *Futures Past*, p.162; Georg Heinrich von Berenhorst, *Betrachtungen über die Kriegskunst, über ihre Fortschritte, ihre Widersprüche und ihre Zuverlässigkeit* (1802), cited in Engberg-Pedersen, p.52.
[810] Peter Paret, *The Cognitive Challenge of War: Prussia, 1806* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2009), pp.33-71; compare to the cultivation of statistics under the Napoleonic regime: Jacques Garnier, 'Anatomie de la bataille napoléonienne: l'application des règles,' in Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *L'Armée, guerre et sociéte à l'époque napoléonnienn: Actes du colloque organisé par l'Institut Napoléon et la Bibliothèque Marmottan les 17 et 18 novembre 2000* (Paris, Éditions SPM, 2004), pp.127-36; and Jean-Claude Perrot, Stuart J. Woolf, *State and Statistics in France, 1789-1815* (Chur, Harwood Academic Publishers, 1984), pp.132-40.
[811] Michel Kerautret, '1807. L'Allemagne à la croisée des chemins,' in Jacques Bernet, Emmanuel Cherrier, eds., *1807: apogée de l'Empire?* (Calhiste, Presses Universitaires de Valenciennes, 1985), pp.113-22.
[812] Friedrich von Gentz, *Aus der alten registratur der Staatskanzlei: Briefe politischen inhalts von und an Friedrich von Gentz aus den Jahren 1799-1827* (Vienna, Wilhelm Braumüller, 1870), p.40: "les chances militaires." "L'idée de la paix, d'une paix quelconque, me fait frémir…mais l'idée de la destruction finale de cette monarchie – événement qui peut se réaliser en moins de deux mois, qui nous enlèverait la totalité de l'avenir après lequel la résurrection même deviendrait impossible, – voilà ce qui me bouleverse, me déchire, m'anéantit!" See, also: Jonathan Green, 'Friedrich Gentz's Translation of Burke's Reflections,' *Historical Journal* 57 (3, 2014), pp.639-59.

tempo of the supply wagon and to lighten baggage trains.[813] Military manoeuvres were thus "de-naturalized" as military logistics were unbound from spatiality.[814]

"Abandoning the quest for universals, for certainty, and the transcendental mapping of the permanent fixtures of the cognitive machinery within speculative philosophy," writes Anders Engberg-Pedersen, military and political observers turned their attention "outward, to the temporary, the local, the unstable, the fluid."[815] Confronted with unfamiliar, unstable, uncontrollable webs of anxieties and expectations, the Napoleonic Wars represented a crisis of both tradition and innovation, which played out as an abbreviation in temporal perceptions – as the sensation characteristic to a state of emergency. History as a "form of static time capable of being experienced as tradition," as a handbook of time-tested exemplars, though conclusively overturned in France, was now exported under arms to Europe.[816] By 1800, historical meaning had been dissolved into a temporality of chance.

II. Zones of Time

Before the chronometric standardisation of time zones during the late nineteenth century, the American and French Empires stretched across several zones of time.[817] Within these zones, the lived experience of time seemed to differ both qualitatively and historically, producing a spatiotemporal incoherence that could not be adequately stratified or standardised by chronometric measurement. The multiple textures of historical time undermined the temporal – and, ultimately, the political – unity of these regimes. Whilst the global grid of time zones would see the conclusive "emptying out" of temporality, the post-revolutionary regimes of America and France were forced to find political functionality across myriad temporal planes, each of which was saturated with historical specificities. Political disorder stemmed directly from temporal disorder, since neither the Napoleonic Empire nor the American "Empire of Liberty" were chronotopically contiguous – individuals and institutions at the centre and periphery imagined, experienced and discussed time in distinct and often mutually contradictory ways. If political "simultaneity" is, as Benedict Anderson observes, dependent

[813] Gunther E. Rothenberg, *The Art of Warfare in the Age of Napoleon* (Bloomington, IN., Indiana University Press, 1980), pp.95-164; John R. Elting, *Swords Around A Throne: Napoleon's Grande Armée* (New York, NY., Da Capo Press, 1988), p.559.
[814] Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of Chance*, p.42, and Martin van Creveld, *Command in War* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1985), pp.60-71.
[815] Engberg-Pedersen, *Empire of Chance*, p.3.
[816] Koselleck, *Futures Past*, p.22.
[817] On the transformations of global timekeeping during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see, *inter alia*: Vanessa Ogle, *The Global Transformation of Time: 1870-1950* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2015), pp.1-3; Adam Barrows, *The Cosmic Time of Empire: Modern Britain and World Literature* (Berkeley, CA., University of California Press, 2011), pp.22-52; on the notion of temporal simultaneity, see: Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space: 1880-1918* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1983), p.314.

upon a type of "transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfilment, but by temporal coincidence," and measured according to "clock and calendar," then the empires of post-revolutionary America and France were non-simultaneous, or rather heterotemporal entities.[818] As such, an assessment of the zones of time that composed these empires takes us into a pre-industrial, chronometrically nebulous time world – as yet untrodden by E.P. Thompson – where the imposition of political and social "discipline" could not yet rely on the ubiquity of a verifiable clocktime.[819] Alternative temporal strategies were required.

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The Napoleonic Empire was a patchwork of overlapping historical planes. As the *Grande Armée* fanned out across the continent, a medley of different territories were submerged beneath the French imperium.[820] In 1806, the Grand Duchy of Berg, the Principality of Regensburg, the Kingdom of Saxony were all collapsed into the Confederation of the Rhine; Bavaria and Württemberg became client kingdoms of France; the Kingdom of Holland was created several months later. After the crushing victory at Austerlitz in December 1805, Napoleon held near total dominion over European space, free to remould it as he pleased. "Roll up that map," William Pitt is supposed to have remarked: "it will not be wanted these ten years."[821]

In 1807, Jacques Claude Beugnot was appointed finance minister of the Kingdom of Westphalia, a vassal state contained within the Confederation and placed under the supervision of the puppet monarch, Jérôme Bonaparte.[822] Charged with modernising its civic and economic structure, Beugnot was aghast by the backwardness he encountered. The historical accretions of feudalism remained so prevalent in the lands consolidated under Westphalia, he remarked, that "one could not find such examples in France without going

[818] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London, Verso, 1983, reprint: 1991), p.24.
[819] On watch ownership in the American nineteenth century, see: Alexis McCrossen, *Marking Modern Times: A History of Clocks, Watches, and Other Timekeepers in American Life* (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2013), pp.29-30.
[820] Alexander Grab, *Napoleon and the Transformation of Europe* (London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), ch.1; and on the growth of the *Grande Empire*, see: Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *La France et l'Europe de Napoléon* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2006), pp.213-36.
[821] John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: The Consuming Struggle* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1996), p.822; the map of Europe was relentlessly reformed during "these ten years": the Kingdom of Holland was dissolved in 1813, and brought *en masse* into the French state; a Republic of Dubrovnik was created in May 1806, only to be disbanded in January 1808; the boundaries of the Kingdoms of Italy and Naples were repeatedly redrawn: Michael Broers, *Europe Under Napoleon, 1799-1815* (New York, NY. I. B. Tauris, republished: 2014), pp.97-140; on the visualisations of different spaces and time in maps, see: Daniel Rosenberg, Anthony Grafton, *Cartographies of Time: A History of the Timeline* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton Architectural Press, 2013), pp.28-51.
[822] Étienne Dejean, *Un Préfet du Consulat: Jacques-Claude Beugnot* (Paris, Plon, 1907), p.40; Charles Schmidt, *Le Grand-Duché de Berg (1806-1813): étude sur la domination française en Allemagne sous Napoléon I^er^* (Paris, Félix Alcan, 1905); Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Le roi Jérôme: frère prodigue de Napoléon, 1784-1860* (Paris, Fayard, 2008).

back four or five centuries."[823] More than a decade of revolutionary upheaval had altered the French perception of the temporal dimensions of political change. "[I]n a revolution," Beugnot wrote in his memoirs, recalling 10 August, 1792, "a month, a day is a century."[824] It was scarcely surprising, then, that when many of the French imperial prefects encountered the inhabitants and institutions absorbed by the Empire they should have commented upon their temporally and historically distant qualities.[825] The "system of feudalism" in Croatia, observed one imperial prefect, "still exists there as it existed in France in the fifteenth century."[826] Despite their relative geographic proximity, the territorial acquisitions of the empire and the imperial centre itself seemed separated by centuries of time. Such descriptions were not burdened by chronometric accuracy: they instead displayed a more approximate criterion of time, which evoked the divergences in the lived experience and historical qualities of regional temporalities. The zones of time that chequered the Napoleonic Empire were, in fact, zones of *historical* time insofar as their divergent temporal dynamics and textures did not correspond to any meaningful divergences in clock-time.

Consequently, the speed of potential reform – which included the abolition of serfdom and soccage, the introduction of trial by jury and the metric system – had necessarily to be tempered by the differing historicities of imperial localities.[827] According to the sub-prefect of the Westphalian province of Stendal, for example, the abolition of local forced labour responsibilities would proceed only gradually since the "majority only reacts

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[823] Jacques Claude Beugnot, 'Rapport des commissaires du roi pour l'organisation du royaume de Westphalie,' in Schmidt, *Le Grand-Duché de Berg*, pp.484-86, here: p.485: "[O]n ne trouverait d'exemples en France qu'en remontant à quatre ou cinq siècles." On Westphalia, and the German Confederation in general, and debates over modernization, see: Armin Owzar, 'Un coup bas ou le point de départ d'un processus de la modernisation? L'année 1807 dans les régions occupées de l'Allemagne,' in Bernet, Cherrier, eds., *1807: apogée de l'Empire?*, pp.123-136; Heinz-Otto Sieburg, 'Napoléon et les transformations des institutions en Allemagne,' *Revue d'histoire moderne et contemporaine* 17 (3, July-September 1970), pp.897-912; K. von Raumer, 'Die Rheinbundstaaten. Deutschland um 1800, Krise und Neugestaltung, 1789-1815,' in M. Boetzenhart, K. von Raumer, eds., *Deutsche Geschichte im 19 Jahrhundert*, Band 3 (Wiesbaden, 1980), I, pp.409-30; Helmut Berding, 'Le Royaume de Westphalie, état-modèle,' *Francia* 10 (1982), pp.345-58. Westphalia was conceived as a model state because it was to be overlaid with the legal apparatus of the *Code Napoléon*, a fact that Beugnot claimed would alter the future of the Rhineland because, before this reform, the histories of the separate states were "turned towards barbarism" ("vers la barbarie"): Schmidt, *Le Grand-Duché de Berg*, p.124.

[824] Jacques-Claude Beugnot, *Mémoires du comte Beugnot* (2 vols., Paris, E. Dentu, 1866), I, p.178: "un mois, un jour, est un siècle en révolution."

[825] I. Woloch, 'Napoleonic Conscription: State Power and Civil Society,' *Past and Present* 111 (1, 1986), pp.101-29; A. E. Whitcomb, 'Napoleon's Prefects,' *American Historical Review* 79 (1974), pp.1089-1118; Louis Bergeron, Guy Chaussinant-Nogaret, Robert Forster, 'Les notables du "Grand Empire" en 1810,' *Annales ESC* 26 (5, 1971), pp.1052-75; and in Westphalia: Jean Savant, *Les Préfets de Napoléon* (Paris, Hachette, 1958), p.150.

[826] Stuart Woolf, 'Napoléon et l'Italie,' in Jean-Clément Martin, ed., *Napoléon et l'Europe: Colloque de la Roche-sur-Yon* (Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2002), pp.115-24, here p.123: "ses mœurs et ses usages, à ce système de féodalité qui y existoit encore, comme il existoit en France au quinzième siècle." Paul-L. Weinacht, concludes that the imposition of the *Code* in the Confederation was largely a failure: 'Les États de la Confédération du Rhin face au Code Napoléon,' in Martin, ed., *Napoléon et l'Europe*, p.100; Stuart Woolf, 'French Civilization and Ethnicity in the Napoleonic Empire,' *Past and Present* 124 (August 1989), pp.96-120.

[827] Michael Broers has noticed how "the lasting impact of French rule did not always correspond to the amount of time Napoleon held a given area," concluding that there were several "zones," including a "core zone" that was far more successful acclimatized to Napoleonic administrative norms that other, outer zones: 'Napoleon, Charlemagne, and Lotharingia: Acculturation and the Boundaries of Napoleonic Europe,' *Historical Journal* 44 (1, March 2002), pp.135-54; Jacques-Olivier Boudon, 'L'exportation du modèle français dans l'Allemagne napoléonienne: l'exemple de la Westphalie' in Martin, ed., *Napoléon et l'Europe*, pp.103-14.

intuitively," their appreciation of rational reform being conditioned by a peculiar sensation of historical time that suffused their immediate environment: "everywhere the matter is still too recent to have offered the opportunity to comprehend such notions."[828] Time moved more slowly. Feudalism in Westphalia, Beugnot admitted in a report to Jérôme, was "not the mild and almost extinct feudalism that existed in France in 1789," but rather had a "hold on the social order, it is at its root." The "reforms must be slow and measured," he insisted: "this is one of those matters where time is needed for success."[829] This technocratic temporal logic frustrated the ambitions of the Napoleonic imperial programme, the administrators of which harboured a genuine belief that the satellite states could be brought into the slipstream of French administrative time without undergoing the concomitant chaos of revolutionary upheaval.[830] In 1808, Louis-Guillaume Otto, imperial representative to the Bavarian court of the Prince-Elector Maximilian, observed how "all the cogs of government, which have already produced such marvellous effects in France," could be "introduced *step by step* into this country," and thereby enable the inhabitants to "profit from our experience without undergoing the shocks" that had riven the Revolution.[831]

Any attempts at standardisation, then, had to confront the divergent historical tempos – the heterotemporality – of the provinces incorporated under the empire. The reorganisation of European space into new administrative units, whilst representing an attempted flattening of regional historical topoi, proved ineffective in imposing temporal uniformity across the empire. The varying historical dynamics of these zones of time resisted rationalisation. Synchronising the multiple temporal planes of the Empire by bringing them into material, institutional and, ultimately, historical conformity would therefore require time – more time than Napoleon could tolerate. Yet haste entailed dangerous political consequences. To the west of the Balkan peninsula, observed one prefectorial report, the inhabitants were "too ignorant," "too poor," but, above all, "too distant from civilization," to "be able to *suddenly* or *without commotion* arrive at perfection." Introducing an entirely new legal code to Westphalia, reflected Beugnot in 1810, would "require a transition," since the subjects of the vassal kingdom were "so far removed from those of France that we would expose ourselves

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[828] Comte de Schulenburg-Bodendorf, cited in Nicola P. Todorov, 'The Napoleonic Administrative System in the Kingdom of Westphalia,' in Michael Broers, Peter Hicks, Agustin Guimera, eds., *The Napoleonic Empire and the New European Political Culture* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp.173-85, here: p.178; see, also: Nicola P. Todorov, 'L'Administration Communale dans le Royaume de Westphalie,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 347 (January-March 2007), pp.113-37.

[829] Beugnot, 'Rapport des commissaires du roi,' p.485: "la féodalité qui subsiste dans vos États, n'est pas cette féodalité adoucie et presque éteinte qu'on trouvait en France en 1789 […]; ici, la féodalité tient à l'ordre social, elle en est la racine." "Mais ici tout réforme doit être lente et mesurée; cette matière est l'une de celles où le temps s'est réservé le succès."

[830] Westphalia received a constitution that guaranteed legal and civic equalities, religious freedoms, abolished serfdom and corporate privileges; in 1808, the *Code Napoléon* – despite Beugnot's calls for haste – was introduced: Helmut Berding, *Napoleonische Herrschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik in Königreich Westfalen, 1807-1813* (Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1973), pp.70-75.

[831] Stuart Woolf, *Napoleon's Integration of Europe* (London, Routledge, 1991), p.118.

to more than one type of danger if we suddenly demanded of them the same services." It was already a great task to "take our institutions to neighbouring peoples," he insisted, "but it remains always a difficult thing to form men for these institutions, until the time comes when they will be born from these institutions themselves."[832] Restructuring the historical texture of a given zone of time would take a generation.

As the pace of reform modulated wildly across the Empire, political unity splintered. In Berg and Bohemia, the lower Rhine Valley and the Trentino, there existed a developed manufacturing base, one capable of rivalling the most economically dynamic regions of France. In southern Spain, meanwhile, the feudal infrastructure – and the Inquisition in particular – proved impervious to reform; in the Duchy of Warsaw, the abolition of noble estates was not even attempted.[833] Napoleon had not always been so adamant for temporal uniformity. During the Egyptian campaign of 1798-99, he proved sufficiently pragmatic to drop the terminology of the Republican Calendar and instead adopt (for nakedly political purposes, of course) local measurements, even penning a letter to the Turkish pasha in Cairo, dated "the month of Muharrem, the Year of the Hegira, 1213."[834]

The most cataclysmic casualty of Napoleonic territorial reorganisation was the Holy Roman Empire, which received its death notice on 1 August, 1806.[835] Its obituaries, however, began appearing as early as July, when, according to one French envoy in Bavaria, news of the imminent demise of the Empire provoked outbreaks of "nostalgia" across Mitteleuropa. Evocations of nostalgia mirrored the melancholia of historical dispossession and dislocation that accompanied revolutionary rupture, and offered emotional expression to the sense in which the past had been suddenly rendered unrecoverable. This experience of history as "the

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[832] Schmidt, *Le grand-duché de Berg*, p.236: "J'appuie sur ce besoin de transition […]. Ils sont si éloignés de ceux de France que l'on s'exposerait à plus d'un genre de danger si on en exigeait tout à coup les mêmes services: *c'est déjà beaucoup de porter nos institutions chez les peuples voisins, mais il reste toujours une chose difficile, c'est de former des hommes pour ces institutions, en attendant le moment où ils naîtront de ces institutions mêmes*."

[833] B. Hammet, 'Spanish constitutionalism and the impact of the French Revolution, 1808-1814,' in Hayden Trevor Mason, William Doyle, eds., *The Impact of the French Revolution on European Consciousness* (Gloucester, Sutton, 1989), pp.69-84; Jarosław Czubaty, 'The Attitudes of the Polish Political Elite towards the State in the Period of the Duchy of Warsaw, 1807-1815,' in Michael Rowe, ed., *Collaboration and Resistance in Napoleonic Europe: State Formation in an Age of Upheaval, c.1800-1815* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), pp.169-85.

[834] Denis Arthur Bingham, *A Selection from the Letters and Despatches of the First Napoleon. With Explanatory Notes* (3 vols., London, Chapman and Hall, 1884), I, p.213; on Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, see: Juan Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), pp.123-42, 203-222; Iradj Amini, 'Napoleon and Persia,' *Iran* 37 (1999), pp.109-22; Paul Strathern, *Napoleon in Egypt* (London, Vintage, 2007), pp.191-203.

[835] Joachim Whaley, *Germany and the Holy Roman Empire: Volume II: The Peace of Westphalia to the Dissolution of the Reich* (2 vols., Oxford, OUP, 2012), II, pp.636-44; Michael Rowe, 'The Political Culture of the Holy Roman Empire on the Eve of its Destruction,' in Alan Forrest, Peter H. Wilson, eds., *The Bee and the Eagle: Napoleonic France and the End of the Holy Roman Empire, 1806* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.42-64; Katharine Weikl, *Krise ohne Alternative? Das Ende des Alten Reiches 1806 in der Wahrnehmung der süddeutschen Reichsfürsten* (Berlin, Frank & Timme, 2006); Peter H. Wilson, *The Holy Roman Empire: A Thousand Years of Europe's History* (London, Penguin, 2016), ch.13; Jason Coy, 'Introduction: The Holy Roman Empire in History and Historiography,' in Jason Philip Coy, Benjamin Marschke, David Warren Sabean, eds., *The Holy Roman Empire, Reconsidered* (New York, NY., Berghahn Books, 2010), pp.1-10.

continual production of the new," writes Peter Fritzsche, exhausted tradition, devalued the applicability of memory whilst nonetheless intensifying a sensation of loss, and uncoupled the future from the ontological tutelage of the past.[836] The primary response was often despair: in Jena, for example, nostalgia provoked a kind of social sickness, a fearfulness that, as Goethe observed, made it "difficult to maintain one's own equilibrium when people's feelings are so unstable."[837] For witnesses to the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire, what heightened this disorientation was the pre-existing spatial spread of different types of time.[838] In this sense, nostalgia was a response to a sudden assault upon a long-standing temporal identity.[839] The landscape of the Rhine Valley, for example, which was framed by towers and turrets, erected across the centuries, provided a visual representation of a living historical continuum.[840] The enormity of dissolution shattered this zone of time. In the course of a few years, the castles that loomed along the Rhine were blasted by French cannonade into a distant, ruined past.[841] The future, meanwhile, was instantly exploded open. "The fluctuating and uncertain character of the immediate future," wrote the Westphalian historian, Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, in the days after dissolution, "has consequences which will exercise an incalculable influence." More important, however, was the perceived qualitative shift that occurred in the regional dynamics of historical time. "Although one is accustomed to expect the speediest progress, that which actually happens always outstrips our boldest imagination. Who would have believed, even only a few weeks ago, that the total dissolution of the German Empire – including its formal aspects – was so imminent?" The immensity of historical events had altered the familiar tempo of time. This political assault upon the zone of time once

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[836] Peter Fritzsche, 'Specters of History: On Nostalgia, Exile and Modernity,' *The American Historical Review* 106 (5, December 2001), pp.1587-1618, here: p.1589; Jürgen Overhoff, 'Benjamin Franklin, Student of the Holy Roman Empire: His Summer Journey to Germany in 1766 and his Interest in the Empire's Federal Constitution,' *German Studies Review* 34 (2, May 2011), pp.277-86.

[837] Goethe, cited in Wolfgang Burgdorf, '"Once we were Trojans!" Contemporary Reactions to the Dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation,' pp.51-78, in R. J. W Evans, Peter H. Wilson, eds., *The Holy Roman Empire, 1495-1806: A European Perspective* (Leiden, Brill, 2012), p.58; Burgdorf conclusively demonstrates how Goethe's dismissive remark that the "contention between the servant and the coachman on the box provoked more passion…than the dividing up of the Roman Empire," does not adequately summarise contemporary feelings of shock and despair, pp.53-4.

[838] "Cologne," observed Johann Kaspar Riesbeck, in his journey through central Europe, seemed "at least a century behind the rest of Germany," since "every thing," from "the speech, dress, furniture of the houses," was "so different from what is seen in the rest of Germany, that you conceive yourself in the middle of a colony of strangers": *Travels through Germany in a Series of Letters; written in German by the Baron Riesbeck* (trans. Rev. Maty), (3 vols., London, T. Cadell, 1787), III, p.268.

[839] Lutz Klinkhammer, 'Kontrolle und Identität. Die Grenzen der Freiheit im Rheinand und in Piemont unter französischer Herrschaft,' in Guido Braun, Gabrielle B. Clemens, Lutz Klinkhammer, Alexander Koller, eds., *Napoleonische Expansionspolitik, Okkupation oder Integration?* (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2013), pp.120-37.

[840] On ruins and landscapes in early-nineteenth century Germany, see: Günter Hartmann, *Die Ruine im Landschaftsgarten: Ihre Bedeutung für den frühen Historismus und die Landschaftsmalerei der Romantik* (Worms, Werner'sche Verlagsgesellschaft, 1981); Joseph Leo Koerner, *Caspar David Friedrich and the Subject of Landscape* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 1990).

[841] The rate of ruination was staggering, which wrought its own immediate-term sense of historical compression: Chateaubriand likened the landscape of Europe "to the collection of ruins and tombstone of all ages which were heaped pell-mell…in the cloisters of the Petits-Augustins: only, the ruins of which I speak were alive and constantly changing": Sophie Thomas, *Romanticism and Visuality: Fragments, History, Spectacle* (London, Routledge, 2007), p.66.

administered by the defunct Empire was reinforced by unrelenting warfare. "Almost at the same moment that I received certain information about this," Dohm hastily scribbled, "I also hear that the French troops are marching upon Saxony."[842]

The logic of Napoleonic administrative rationalisation, which necessarily had to confront the entrenched traditionalism of the Holy Roman Empire, sought to create a common, trans-imperial appreciation of time. It did so by depicting the historicity of the Holy Roman Empire as perilously unresponsive to the exigencies of modern time, as institutionally incapable of absorbing the unforeseen, the hazardous and the mere chance.[843] The regime of tradition could not, after all, account for the appearance of non-iterative historical scenarios. According to the declaration of dissolution: "For a long period successive changes have, from century to century, reduced the German constitution to a shadow of its former self." "Time," the declaration further observed, had "altered all the relations in respect to the size and importance which originally existed among the various members of the confederation," placing "people and princes alike under the delusive protection of a system contrary both to their political interests and to their treaties." As a consequence, the kingdoms and principalities of Germany had "resolved to form a confederation" that was designed explicitly to "secure them against future emergencies" – the precise prescription of political legitimacy that undergirded the Napoleonic regime.[844]

Whilst the speed of expansion made the synchronisation of historical time across the Napoleonic Empire difficult to achieve, it was the variegated dynamics of localised temporalities – the regional historicities – that made the Empire itself potentially unstable. This splintered the legitimate exercise of power across the Empire, Beugnot observed, because it came up against historically entrenched interests: the nobility in Düsseldorf, for example, believed that "they could *regain* all that they had lost" through Napoleonic rationalisation in a coming war that "would be entirely *feudal*."[845] For the sake of administrative functionality and fealty, then, the multiple zones of time would need to be harmonized; yet the only common time cutting across these zones was the time of war.

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[842] Burgdorf, '"Once we were Trojans!"' p.55; see, also: Brendan Simms, *The Impact of Napoleon: Prussian High Politics, Foreign Policy, and the Crisis of the Executive, 1797-1806* (Cambridge, CUP, 1997), pp.304-37.
[843] Maike Oergel, *Culture and Identity: Historicity in German Literature and Thought, 1770-1815* (Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 2006), pp.1-13; Govind P. Sreenivasan, 'Speaking Nothing to Power in Early Modern Germany: Making Sense of Peasant Silence in the Ius Commune,' in Zwierlein, ed., *The Dark Side of Knowledge*, pp.88-115.
[844] 'The Confederation of the Rhine and the Dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire (1 August 1806),' in James H. Robinson, ed., *Translations and Reprints from the Original Sources of European History, Vol.II, no.2: The Napoleonic Period* (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania, 1902), pp.13-15; Peter H. Wilson, 'Bolstering the Prestige of the Habsburgs: The End of the Holy Roman Empire in 1806,' *The International History Review* 28 (4, December 2006), pp.709-36.
[845] Schmidt, *Le Grand-Duché de Berg*, p.427: "il y a peu d'anciens nobles dont les vœux secrets ne soient pour l'Autriche; ils se persuadent que si elle obtenait le succès ils *regagneraient* tout ce qu'ils ont perdu; cette guerre sera toute *féodale*..." On regional resistance to the Empire, see: Jacques Godechot, Beatrice F. Hyslop, David L. Dowd, *The Napoleonic Era in Europe* (New York, NY., Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971), pp.140-59.

As Natalie Petiteau has noted, "the time of the Empire [was] above all a time punctuated by war."[846] Some sense of simultaneity – a common time, in effect – was created throughout Napoleonic Europe by the relentlessness of war.[847] The *Bulletin de la Grande Armée*, a propagandistic newssheet that appeared after 1805, recounted the essential details of military operations, often on an hour-by-hour basis.[848] The ongoing activity of campaigns determined the pace of its publication, thus the *Bulletin* circulated with a greater regularity as warfare intensified and ceased once hostilities had concluded. The tempo of news circulation throughout the Empire therefore mirrored the dynamics of military conquest. Indeed, Napoleon even used military couriers [*les estafettes*] in order to better circulate information around imperial domains: "a more rapid means of correspondence," the Emperor told his brother, Joseph, the king of Naples, "will benefit your administration."[849] The *Bulletin* was carried in the *Moniteur universel*, and though transmission times could vary (it sometimes took weeks to reach remoter provinces), the consumption of this time-specific – and often hourly specified – information synchronised the Empire's various zones of time according to the historic significance of the operations of the *Grande Armée*. Unlike the rational delineation of imperial space, the multiple topoi of imperial time were only brought into (occasional) coordinated distribution by the framework of historical events, by the military achievements of Napoleon. In 1807, for example, the baron Marbot recalled how French troops stationed outside Friedland arose one morning entirely unaware, until the *Bulletin* arrived, that the day marked the anniversary of Marengo, the glorious victory over Austria in 1800.[850] Few of the soldiers had any sense of the universal references to the date and hour of

[846] Natalie Petiteau, 'Les Français face au temps de l'Empire,' *Revue d'histoire du XIXe siècle* 25 (2002), pp.29-41: "le temps de l'Empire est avant tout un temps ponctué par la guerre."
[847] This was true of the military victory, too: "Strategy is the art of making use of time and space. I am less chary of the latter than of the former; space we can recover, time never," Napoleon remarked: David G. Chandler, *The Campaigns of Napoleon* (New York, NY., Simon & Schuster, 1999), p.149.
[848] Napoléon Bonaparte, *Proclamations, ordres du jour et bulletins de la Grande Armée*, Jean Tulard, ed., (Paris, Union Générale d'Éditions, 1964); Stendhal, in particular, would later study copies of the *Bulletins* as a model of terse, immediate prose: David F. Bell, *Real Time: Accelerating Narrative from Balzac to Zola* (Urbana, IL., University of Illinois Press, 2004), pp.76-102; the first complete set of the *Bulletins* was published in 1822, see: *Bulletins Officiels de la Grand Armée, dictés par l'Empereur Napoléon; et Recueillis par Alexandre Goujon, Ancien Officier d'Artillerie Légère, Membre de la Légion d'Honneur* (Paris, Alexandre Corréard, 1822).
[849] *Napoléon Bonaparte. Correspondance générale*, Michel Kerautret, dir., (12 vols., Paris, Fayard, 2009), IV, p.346: "J'ai établi une estafette…cette mesure aura l'avantage de nous offrir des moyens de correspondance plus rapides que par les courriers ordinaires et dont vos administrations pourront profiter."
[850] Jean-Baptiste-Antoine-Marcelin, baron de Marbot, *Mémoires du général de Marbot* (2 vols., Paris, E. Plon, 1891), I, pp.363-5; it is the "Marengo Moment," as Robert Morrissey has termed it, that "marks the transition toward a politics of legitimation through glory": *The Economy of Glory: From Ancien Régime France to the Fall of Napoleon* (trans. Teresa Lavender Fagan), (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 2014), p.92; "This battle of Friedland," read the *Bulletin* on 18 June 1807, "is worth to be numbered with those of Marengo, Austerlitz and Jena," since it formed a vital part in the momentous history of the Empire; the proclamation from Napoleon was appended to the *Bulletin* of 22 June, which read: "From the banks of Vistula we have reached the banks of the Niemen with the rapidity of the eagle. You celebrated at Austerlitz the anniversary of the coronation, you celebrate this year, in an appropriate manner, the battle of Marengo," securing a peace that "carries with it the guarantee of its duration": J. David Markoff, *Imperial Glory: The Bulletins of Napoleon's Grande Armée, 1805-1814* (London, Greenhill Books, 2003), p.169, 173; Owen Connelly, *Blundering to Glory: Napoleon's Military Campaigns* (Lanham, MD., Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), pp.75-116; Marcel Baldet, *La vie quotidienne dans les armées de*

victory, which seemingly offered no coordinating function along the remote, barren Baltic coastline; it was, rather, the historical significance of Marengo to the Empire that bestowed a sense of place in time. Unlike the prototypical technology of optical telegraphy, which was devised by Claude Chappe in 1792 – and which Napoleon used on 19 Brumaire to assure public opinion in the capital, before alternative interpretations could proliferate, that "Paris is calm and all good citizens are content," – the circulation of glorious anniversaries in the *Bulletin* created a common appreciation of history amongst the ordinary soldiery.[851] Whilst the speed of telegraphic messaging could create a sense of event simultaneity across extensive spaces – "the time required for the communication does not increase proportionally with the distance," Chappe observed in 1792, – it could not cohere the divergent historicities spanning the Empire.[852] That was the work of war.

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In the political imagination of the nascent American Republic, the textures of time and history also diverged according to space, in particular at the frontier, which was conceived as both a temporal and spatial phenomenon.[853] Life along the frontier was protean and erratic: the conditions and circumstances of material existence seemed to be in a constant state of flux. Between 1787 and 1788, Mary Dewees, a well-to-do Pennsylvanian matron, kept a journal of her journey through the western territories, from her home in Philadelphia to the rural reaches of Kentucky. In October 1788, at a small settlement "about a mile from Pittsburgh," Dewees recorded the sudden unpredictability characteristic of daily life at the frontier:

> *October 23^{d}* – Drank tea at the French ladys with several ladys and gentlemen of this place.
> *October 24th* – The Town all in arms, a report prevailed that a party of Indians within twenty miles, coming to attack the Town. The drums beating to Arms, with the

Napoléon (Paris, Hachette, 1964), p.132-33; John A. Lynn, 'Toward an Army of Honor: The Moral Evolution of the French Army, 1789-1815,' *French Historical Studies* 16 (1, Spring 1989), pp.152-73.
[851] Ernest Jacquez, *Claude Chappe, notice biographique* (Paris, Alphonse Picard et fils, 1893), pp.7-10, p.14; Roger Gachet, *Le Télégraphe Optique de Claude Chappe* (Crest, l'Imprimerie de Crestois, 1993), pp.74-75: "Paris est tranquille et les bons citoyens sont contents."
[852] As Chappe told the Legislative Assembly in 1792: "Le récit d'un fait ou d'un évènement quelconque pet être transmis, la nuit ainsi que le jour, à plus de 40 milles dans moins de 46 minutes. Cette transmission s'opérerait d'une manière presque aussi rapide à une distance beaucoup plus grande (le temps employé pour la communication n'augmentant point en raison proportionnelle des espaces)": Jacquez, *Claude Chappe*, pp.14-15. David Carvounas, *Diverging Time: The Politics of Modernity in Kant, Hegel, and Marx* (Lanham, MD., Lexington Books, 2002), pp.1-2.
[853] Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr., 'Space, Time, Culture and the New Frontier,' *Agricultural History* 38 (1, 1964), pp.21-30, see: p.30: "the uniqueness of the frontier is basically not one of place, but of time, making possible the rapid extension of certain trends prevailing in Anglo-American society during a given period"; Arthur K. Moore, *The Frontier Mind, a cultural analysis of the Kentucky Frontiersman* (Lexington, KY., University of Kentucky Press, 1957); John K. Lauck, '"The Silent Artillery of Time": Understanding Social Change in the Rural Midwest,' *Great Plains Quarterly* 19 (4, Fall 1999), pp.245-55.

> Militia collecting from every part of the Town, has I assure you a very disagreeable appearance.[854]

One day, Dewees was politely taking tea in a fashionable drawing room; the next, she was suddenly under siege, a hostage to the hazards of frontier life. Veering from gentility to emergency with such rapidity underscored the "unconstancy" that made the western settlements seem so prey to chance events. In July 1788, Colonel John May penned a letter to his wife, kindly hoping that she would "never have such a time of risk and suspense as I am having," as he journeyed across the sparsely populated, treacherous terrain of the Ohio country.[855] After the Revolution, the frontier remained a site of territorial contention, and whilst the Allegheny Mountains represented a natural barrier with northerly Indian territories, it remained unstable, bolstered only by a tenuous treaty struck with the Six Nations of the Iroquois in 1784.[856] Western inhabitants had therefore to be alive to the sudden appearance of "a party of Indians," ready to "attack" their property and family.[857] Interestingly, the time available to react to this perceived threat was measured in space. Thus the town was instantly placed "all in arms" because the Indians were reportedly "within twenty miles." News of this attack was entirely unconfirmed, of course, and Dewees does not subsequently mention its materialisation. The geographic context of the frontier, however, meant that the information relative to a variety of dangers could often travel at a slower pace than the dangers themselves. In this sense, the temporal measurement of danger was almost meaningless since by the time the information of "twenty miles" had circulated, the attack might in fact be imminent. The sense of alarm was instant. As Dewees recorded, the "disagreeable" response of a militia "beating to Arms" was thus premised upon a probability calculus derived from an

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[854] Mary Dewees, 'Mrs. Mary Dewees's Journal from Philadelphia to Kentucky, 1787-1788,' *The Pennsylvanian Magazine of History and Biography* 28 (2, 1904), pp.182-198, here: p.190; Linzy A. Brekke, 'The "Scourge of Fashion": Political Economy and the Politics of Consumption in the Early Republic,' *Early American Studies* 3 (1, Spring 2005), pp.111-39; on gender and the image of the imperilled woman on the frontier, see: Cynthia Culver Prescott, *Gender and Generation on the Far Western Frontier* (Tucson, AZ., University of Arizona Press, 2007), pp.14-37; Lorrayne Carroll, '"Affecting History": Impersonating Women in the Early Republic,' *Early American Literature* 39 (3, 2004), pp.511-52; Lillian Schlissel, 'Mothers and Daughters on the Western Frontier,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* 3 (2, Summer 1978), pp.29-33.

[855] Colonel John May, *Journal and Letters of Col. John May, of Boston, relative to Two Journeys to the Ohio Country in 1788 and '89* (Cincinnati, OH., Robert Clarke & Co., 1873), p.133; on migration into the Ohio territory, see: R. Douglas Hurt, *The Ohio Frontier: Crucible of the Old Northwest, 1720-1830* (Bloomington, IN., Indiana University Press, 1996), pp.179-210.

[856] William R. Nester, *The Frontier War for American Independence* (Mechanicsburg, PA., Stackpole Books, 2004), pp.331-42; Paul B. Moyer, *Wild Yankees: The Struggle for Independence Along Pennsylvania's Revolutionary Frontier* (Ithaca, NY., Cornell University Press, 2007), pp.94-119; on pre-revolutionary interactions with the Iroquois, see: Patrick Spero, *Frontier Country: The Politics of War in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), p.94; on Native American perceptions of temporality, see: Cheryl Wells, *Suns, Moons, Clocks, and Bells: Native Americans and Time* (USC History Seminar, 1 December 2008), p.1-21.

[857] When Arthur St. Clair led an expedition into the northwestern Ohio to punish an Indian settlement for an attack on U.S. soldiers, Washington warned him: "beware surprise! You know how the Indians fight us": Hurt, *Ohio Frontier*, p.118.

assessment of the topographic, informational and temporal realities of frontier life – a life saturated by sudden chance.

The sporadic distribution of settlements strained the information infrastructure connecting the zones of times that constituted the early American Republic, such that distance in space stretched the perceived distance in time separating west and east, centre and periphery.[858] This presented problems for the energetic exercise of political authority. When the capital of the United States had been New York, remarked Samuel Henshaw, the citizens of the Connecticut Valley keenly followed the debates of Congress; in 1790, however, with the capital relocated eighty miles south to Philadelphia, "we scarce know you are in session."[859] If the decrees and directives of the federal government – and even news of congressional deliberation – could not reach distant regions of the Union *before* the political circumstances of those regions altered, then the temporal structure of the Republic would be forever out of synch, diminishing or deranging the application of political authority. It was not until 1796, for example, that the general post office established an hour-by-hour stagecoach schedule that could communicate information across the nascent Republic at a regularised rate.[860] The coexistence of these overlapping zones of time would reach a crisis point in 1794.

The Whiskey Rebellion was a rural uprising centred upon western Pennsylvania, where aggrieved frontiersmen sought to resist a federal excise tax, passed in 1791, on distilled alcohol.[861] Although sporadic incidents of disobedience had been recorded since the initial levy of the excise, it was on 17 July 1794 that events "burst forth with an explosion," and "electrified the whole United States." To the sound of drumbeat, seven hundred militiamen descended upon the estate of John Neville, the regional intendant for tax collection, and threatened to torch his property if he refused to resign his post. When Neville relented, the blaze began. By August, several thousand rebels were marching upon Pittsburgh, ready to stage a military assembly. The insurrection began to spread. In Kentucky and western

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[858] John, *Spreading the News*, pp.1-24, 112-168; John Lauritz Larson, *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Daniel P. Carpenter, *The Forging of Bureaucratic Autonomy: Reputations, Networks and Policy Innovation in executive Agencies, 1862-1928* (Princeton, NJ. Princeton University Press, 2001), pp.14-36.
[859] Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, p.481.
[860] John, *Spreading the News*, p.101; Arthur Hecht, 'Government Owned and Operated Coastwise Mail Service of the Eighteenth Century' *American Neptune* 22 (1962), pp.55-64; Richard F. Palmer, *The "Old Mail Line": Stagecoach Days in Upstate New York* (Lakemont, NY., North Country Books, 1977).
[861] The best general narrative of the rebellion is undoubtedly, Thomas P. Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion: Frontier Epilogue to the American Revolution* (Oxford, OUP, 1986); Mary K. Bonsteel Tachau, 'A New Look at the Whiskey Rebellion,' in Steven R. Boyd, ed., *The Whiskey Rebellion: Past and Present Perspectives* (Westport, CN., 1985), 97-118; see, also: Dorothy E. Fennell, 'From Rebelliousness to Insurrection: A Social History of the Whiskey Rebellion, 1765-1802' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Pittsburgh, PA., 1981); Kevin T. Barkside, 'Our Rebellious Neighbors: Virginia's Border Counties during Pennsylvania's Whiskey Rebellion,' *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111 (1, 2003), pp.5-32; and more generally: Solon J. Buck, Elizabeth Buck, *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania* (Pittsburgh, PA., University of Pittsburgh Press, 1939).

Virginia, counties prepared programmes for independent self-governance; the "infatuated and frantic" inhabitants of Washington County, Pennsylvania, were reported to "prefer a civil war to a submission to the excise laws."[862]According to Chief Justice John Marshall, the rebellion represented the most potent existential threat to the United States since the Revolutionary War.[863] For Washington, it struck "at the root of all law & order," since "if such proceedings were tolerated there was an end to our Constitution & laws."[864]

The separate zones of time that spanned the American Republic created logistical and political chaos. When these zones stretched perceived *historical* distances, however, the crisis of political authority become dangerously ideological, presenting the Union with mortal dangers. "We are too distant from the grand seat of information," remarked the Kentuckian, John Breckinridge, in September 1794, at the height of the Rebellion; the western settlers, meanwhile, were,

> too much hackneyed in the old fashioned principles of 1776, to receive much light from the…new fashioned systems and schemes of policy, which are the offspring and ornament of the present administration.[865]

Relative distances from the information hub of the federal government caused a fragmentation in the dynamics of historical time that encompassed the Republic. Outwardly, the western settlements certainly seemed to occupy a simpler age. Log cabins lined uneven, earthen streets, many of which were transformed into quagmires during heavy rainfall. The sense of seclusion was heightened by the rudimentary roads – in effect, dirt tracks – that made wagon journeys injury-prone experiences. The inhabitants, meanwhile, seemed to live at the edge of civilization. "The people," observed Dewees, were "very kind but amazing[ly] dirty."[866] Many second-generation migrants – the children of the westward settlers – actually underwent intellectual decline during the first few decades on account of the absence of educational institutions and the distracting labour demands involved in erecting farmsteads.[867] The historicity of the frontier was thus conditioned by the temporal dynamics of a poorly

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[862] William Findley, *History of the Insurrection in the Four Western Counties of Pennsylvania in the Year 1794: with a recital of the circumstances specially connected therewith, and an historical review of the previous situation of the country* (Philadelphia, PA., Samuel Harrison Smith, 1796), p.67, 308.
[863] Slaughter, *The Whiskey Rebellion*, p.5.
[864] Richard H. Kohn, 'The Washington Administration's Decision to Crush the Whiskey Rebellion,' *The Journal of American History* 59 (3, December 1972), pp.567-84, here: p.573.
[865] John Breckinridge to Samuel Hopkins (15 September, 1794), cited in Patrick Griffin, *American Leviathan: Empire, Nation, and Revolutionary Frontier* (New York, NY., Hill and Wang, 2007), p.233.
[866] Dewees, 'Mrs. Mary Dewees's Journal,' p.185.
[867] Russell J. Ferguson, *Early Western Pennsylvania Politics* (Pittsburgh, PA., University of Pittsburgh Press, 1938), p.17; as the *Pittsburgh Mercury* would report, as late as November 1813: "The first exertions of the colonist will be directed toward the attainment of the necessaries of life and the struggle against wild nature," which must "for a long time retard the progress of the human mind, and the liberal culture of science and literature": Richard C. Wade, *The Urban Frontier: The Rise of Western Cities, 1790-1830* (Urbana, IL., University of Illinois Press, 1996), p.39.

connected information framework. The Western territories, remarked the *Carlisle Gazette* in July 1794, presented a landscape "uncontaminated with Atlantic luxury" and "beyond the reach of European influences." The frontier remained at centuries remove from "the pampered vultures of commercial countries" who had "not yet found access" to it.[868]

Access was further exacerbated by a concerted campaign of obstruction; rural inhabitants, determined to reinforce the peculiar temporality of the frontier, created blockages in the transportation and information networks of the Republic. Aggrieved Pennsylvanians felled trees, dug ditches, engineered avalanches – all in the hope of subverting tax collection or property repossession. Blockades on roads that led to courthouses, for example, slowed legal processes by obstructing the prosecution of tax rebels or debtors. In 1792, when Congress passed a law expanding the scope of "delinquent" accounts to include the repayment schedules to the land bank, road barricades rapidly proliferated across the western Pennsylvanian counties of Cumberland, Dauphin and Washington.[869] Frustrating the communication networks of the nascent Republic enabled rural citizens to delay the administration of justice, which, in the political imagination of the frontier, was increasingly seen as illegitimate.

Unlike the administrative corps of the Napoleonic Empire, then, the agents of the federal government – notably, those who were assigned to the increasingly lawless lands of western Pennsylvania after 1791 – were not charged with the ponderous task of reforming sclerotic feudal societies. In the American Republic, synchronising the divergent political velocities of the various zones of time was primarily a problem of "speedup."[870] Power relations at the frontier played out at a *variable* velocity, which, on account of its distance from the constitutional core of the Republic, made political life susceptible to sudden acceleration. The zone of time encompassing the western frontier was characterised by a temporal agility, a precipitancy: as Rochefoucauld-Liancourt observed, time at the frontier was fleeting; the structures of society were mutable, forming and reforming in the course of weeks or months; its inhabitants, meanwhile, were entirely itinerant, pushing ceaselessly into undeveloped space and constantly re-establishing – and thus re-energizing – "the old fashioned principles of 1776."[871] As a consequence, the frontier was chronopolitically situated

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[868] *The Carlisle Gazette* (9 July, 1794): Griffin, *American* Leviathan, p.236.
[869] The motivations and consequences of this campaign are exhaustively addressed in, Terry Bouton, 'A Road Closed: Rural Insurgency in Post-Independence Pennsylvania,' *Journal of American History* 87 (3, December 2000), pp.855-87; as Bouton demonstrates, the notion that the first generation of ordinary Americans were economic liberals is central to the historiography of the era – see, esp: Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2000) – but belied by the facts: p.885-86.
[870] On political "speedup," see: Sarah Sharma, *In the Meantime: Temporality and Cultural Politics* (Durham, NC., Duke University Press, 2014), who contends that the manipulation of modern time is akin to a form of "power chronography," a means of regulating the "complexity of lived time" and the threats it poses to the social order: p.4, 6
[871] Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, *Voyages dans les États-Unis*, I, p.xi

within a "revolutionary" present. If many Federalists such as Hamilton and Fisher Ames had hoped that the constitutional regime conceived at the Convention would foster a post-revolutionary society, then the political culture of the frontier may be described as peri-revolutionary – it continued to exist within the ongoing present that had once constituted Paine's revolutionary "*now*."

As a consequence, the 1794 uprisings were about a lot more than the price of whiskey. In their conflict with the federal centre, the inhabitants of the frontier, and western Pennsylvania in particular, imagined the

Invoking a modality of time premised upon the "principles of 1776" legitimated the right, for example, to speedily assemble at any moment in order to overthrow any constituted authority that "the people" suddenly deemed illegitimate.[872] Thus the rebels of Franklin County boasted, in August 1794, that it would take them only "six hours [to] raise 500 men," and to replace every "damned rascal" in the federal government.[873] In this sense, the temporal perspective of the insurgents directly recalled that of the Shays's rebels. As Abigail Adams observed to Jefferson, in January 1787: "Instead of that laudible spirit which you approve, which makes a people watchfull over their Liberties and alert in the defence of then, these mobbish insurgents are for sapping the foundation, and destroying the whole fabric *at once*."[874] According to one Pittsburgh judge, the momentum of the rebels, "like a torrent, would increase more and more in their rapid course towards the seat of government."[875] Along the frontier the use of the liquid metaphor to describe the temporality of "the people" remained disturbingly relevant.[876] Several days after the assembly at Braddock's Field, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, a Pennsylvanian Federalist, compared the unequal tempos of the insurgency and the federal government by reaching for an aqueous analogy:

> Should any attempt be made to suppress these people, I am afraid the question will not be whether *you* will march to Pittsburgh, but whether *they* will march to Philadelphia, accumulating in their course, swelling over the banks of the Susquehanna like a torrent, irresistible and devouring in its progress.[877]

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[872] Leonard L. Richards, *Shays's Rebellion: The American Revolution's Final Battle* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp.135-36.
[873] Bouton, *Taming Democracy*, p.240.
[874] Abigail Adams to Thomas Jefferson (29 January 1787), in C. James Taylor, Margaret A. Hogan, Celeste Walker, Anne Decker Cecere, Gregg L. Lint, Hobson Woodward, Mary T. Claffey, eds., *The Adams Papers*. Adams Family Correspondence (11 vols., Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 2007), VII, p.455.
[875] Affidavit of Judge Lucas: Henry Brackenridge*, History of the Western Insurrection: Commonly Called the Whiskey Insurrection*, 1794 (Pittsburgh, PA., W. S. Haven, 1859), p.182.
[876] Aqueous analogies were typically used during the eighteenth century to invoke a conception of life constantly afflicted by chance: see, Hans Blumenberg, *Schiffbruch mit Zuschauer: Paradigma einer Daseinsmetapher* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkampf, 1997).
[877] Brackenridge, *History of the Western Insurrection*, p.145.

This imagery of a torrential stream that acquires an "irresistible" mass as it proceeds, engulfing the capital and "devouring" political authority, underscored the disconcerting suddenness with which "the people" could "accumulate." Perhaps more disorientating, however, was the similar speed with which "the people" could evaporate. In late August, observed William Findley in his contemporary *History of the Insurrection* (1796), "the insurrection progressed for a few days like the paroxism of an inflammatory fever," but it soon "spent its force in frequent irregular convulsions, and finally subsided almost as suddenly, and to many as unexpectedly, as it commenced."[878]

Washington would draw upon this temporality when, during his Sixth Annual Address to Congress, he wilfully – and largely without evidence – combined the activities of the Whiskey Rebels with the ambitions of the Democratic-Republican Societies.[879] Whilst "the greater part of Pennsylvania" was "conforming" to the excise, certain "societies" were "resolved to frustrate them." When these societies contrived to create "further delay" and therefore an "opinion of impotency or irresolution in the Government," he intervened.[880] Washington would no longer tolerate the staccato of the popular sovereign will. These "self-created societies," he told Jay in November, had fomented extra-constitutional violence "hoping to effect some revolution in the government."[881] His designation of "self-created" drew upon the perceived impermanence of popular political participation, and portrayed "the people" – at least as they were constituted by the Democratic-Republican Societies – as a mercurial force, capable of suddenly appearing to overthrow a constitutionally ordained government. Federalists feared that the static unity of sovereign power – which, according to constitutional law, allowed "the people" to manifest itself according to the fixed durations of the electoral process – was dissolving along the frontier. Michelle Sizemore has demonstrated how it became increasingly difficult, two decades after the start of the Revolution, to conceive of "the people" as an aggregate, as a sum of all parts, because those parts seemed to undergo continual rearrangement: "the extemporaneous and shifting formations on the frontier proved that the people could never be the total of their wills because they are constantly changing."

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[878] Findlay, *History of the Insurrection*, p.137.
[879] On the proliferation of the Democratic-Republican societies during the 1790s: Robert W. T. Martin, *Government by Dissent: Protest, Resistance, and Radical Democratic Thought in the Early American Republic* (New York, NY., New York University Press, 2013), pp.55-82, 83-114; Richard A. Ifft, 'Treason in the Early Republic: The Federal Courts, Popular Protest, and Federalism during the Whiskey Insurrection,' in Boyd, ed. *The Whiskey Rebellion*, pp.165-82: Albert Koschnik, 'The Democratic Societies of Philadelphia and the Limits of American Public Sphere, c.1793-95,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68 (July, 2001), pp.615-36; and Matthew Schoenbacher, 'Republicanism in the Age of the Democratic Revolution: The Democratic-Republican Societies of the 1790s', *Journal of the Early Republic* 18 (Spring, 1998), pp.237-62.
[880] George Washington, 'Sixth Annual Address to Congress, 19 November, 1794,' in Fitzpatrick, ed. *The Writings of George Washington*, XXXIV, pp.28-37, here: p.29.
[881] George Washington to John Jay (1 November 1794), in David R. Hoth, Carol S. Ebel, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*. Presidential Series (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2013), XVII, pp.127.

They were "a force always in motion."[882] In order to better attune the political process to the characteristics of the frontier zone of time, for example, the citizens of the district of Hamilton had even devised a local constitution in which a legislative council would be elected every six months and presided over by a single magistrate elected every nine.[883] In this "kinetic setting," observes Robert Wiebe, western settlers felt little respect for the distantly delivered diktats of eastern governments. Since the conditions life were constantly fluctuating, "hierarchic tiers had no chance to form," and so any "sense of a contained, personally integrated whole" also failed to materialise.[884] As the frontier shifted in space, so the tempo of its political culture altered too.

For Federalists, the Democratic-Republican societies, "which have spread themselves over this country," were the information medium operating between the insurgent counties of the frontier.[885] They thereby facilitated the runaway possibilities of popular sovereignty by enabling the dissemination of information relative to the rebellion to spread at a tempo greater than that which the federal government could administrate for order. The separate zone of time inhabited by the rebels set federal agents at a disadvantage because, under the sluggish circulation of information and the obstacles impeding travel, their activities were constantly rendered *too late*. In August, when the Attorney General, William Bradford, led a negotiation delegation into western Pennsylvania, circumstances in the backcountry had deteriorated, almost beyond repair – in the time taken just to get there.[886] Despite riding forty miles or more on horseback everyday, for nearly three weeks, they arrived at Bedford only to be greeted by a shaken John Neville who told them to turn back, citing the escalation of violence in the surrounding settlements. On 17 August, Bradford informed Washington that the insurgents were delaying their negotiations in anticipation of winter, which would provide "time to strengthen themselves – to circulate the manifesto they are preparing – to tamper with…Kentucky – to procure Ammunition…"[887] Winter would therefore create an ice wall between east and west, by which time the Union would have all but cracked apart. Two days later, federal envoys recommended an immediate mobilisation of federal troops.

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[882] Michelle Sizemore, 'When are the People?: Temporality, Popular Sovereignty, and the U.S. Settler State,' *South Central Review* 30 (1, Spring 2013), pp.3-31, here: p.20, 19.
[883] Griffin, *American Leviathan*, p.230.
[884] Robert Wiebe, *Opening American Society: From the adoption of the Constitution to the eve of disunion* (New York, NY., Knopf, 1984), p.132.
[885] George Washington to John Jay (1 November 1794), Hoth, Ebel, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*, XVII, p.127; on the reach of the Democratic-Republican societies in the north east: Alfred F. Young, *The Democratic Republicans of New York: The Origins, 1763-1797* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 1967), pp.392-412.
[886] On Washington and road-building projects, see: Theodore Sky, *The National Road and the Difficult Path to Sustainable National Investment* (Newark, DE., University of Delaware Press, 2011), pp.5-14; Anita Vickers, *The New Nation: American Popular Culture Through History* (Westport, CN., Greenwood Press, 2002), p.218.
[887] Kohn, 'The Washington Administration's Decision to Crush the Whiskey Rebellion, ' p.578.

If the politics of the frontier continued to operate outside constitutional time, then it would be impossible for the Union to endure. "My mind is so perfectly convinced," Washington wrote in October, "that if these *self created* societies cannot be discountenanced [they] will destroy the government of this Country."[888] The duration-creating mechanisms of the federal constitution were undermined by the instantaneity with which popular sovereignty appeared to operate at the frontier.[889] The deliberative velocity of the rebels was exemplified during a meeting at Mingo Creek in July, when, according to Brackenridge, "[t]here was but a moment between treason on the one hand, and popular odium on the other."[890] There was simply no time to decide between the wrath of the mob or the "legally wrong" rebellion. Soon after concluding his conciliatory (and completely unsuccessful) speech, Brackenridge scarpered, fearful for his personal safety. The constituent power of the people, thought to have been injected with "intervals" by the pausing power of the Constitution, now led once again to a wave of "precipitant," destructive passions. The temporal pressure exerted by this constituent power – which, at the frontier, was largely beyond the reach of any constitutional limit – reduced the duration of popular deliberation to "a moment." As Findley observed, it was "owing to [these] circumstances of a local nature," that violence so precipitously broke out across the backcountry, "and drew many into the vortex of riot, who would have been far from engaging in it, if they had had time to deliberate on the consequences."[891] According to Albert Gallatin, a sympathetic though moderate voice, the political disorder sweeping western Pennsylvania was primarily a problem of the absence of duration:

> Time was essentially requisite in order to enable the friends of government to disseminate amongst the body of the people both information and sentiments of moderation, and from time alone might it be expected that those violent passions, which still inflamed so many, would subside.

In the zone of time of the frontier, time itself proved sparse. "Indeed, during the whole course of the transactions that followed," surmised Gallatin, "it was, upon every occasion, equally experienced that time alone was sufficient to obtain a progressive restoration of order, and

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[888] George Washington to Edmund Randolph (16 October, 1794), in Hoth, Ebel, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*. The Presidential Series, XVII, pp.72-73.
[889] Paulina Ochoa Espejo, *The Time of Popular Sovereignty: Process and the Democratic State* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2011), pp.137.
[890] This directly contravened Madison's "temporal republicanism," which, as Greg Weiner has argued, was a platform for harnessing what Madison saw "as the inherent power of time to dissipate passions." Indeed, at the age of 12, Madison took notes on Montaigne's definition of "Time," invoking the perilous liquid metaphor and opining that human "passions are like Torrents which may be diverted, but not obstructed.": Wiener, *Madison's Metronome*, p.3, 1.
[891] Findley, *History of the Insurrection*, p.136, 67.

lamented that a sufficient delay could not, from the general situation of affairs, be always obtained."[892]

Still, these "circumstances of a local nature" – circumstances peculiar to the "local" zone of time – would strongly inform the federal investigation into the nature of the rebellion and the ongoing instability of the frontier. In the fourth and final report compiled by Bradford, the localised characteristic of lived time and the historicity of the frontier were collapsed into the same category: the continued threat posed by "several unruly and turbulent spirits" amongst the western citizenry was attributable to the fact that "these men, having little or no property to lose, may possibly create new disturbances." Only "reasonable hope" could be entertained that the inhabitants of the western frontier would become "dutiful citizens in the future."[893] The perception of historical time in frontier communities therefore conditioned frontier politics. After all, lives lived exclusively in the present, divested of any political or commercial interest in the future and habituated to the haphazardness of frontier existence, had created a category of citizen that equated participation in political instability with the ongoing expression, and thus the defence, of liberty.

This rebellion, snarled Washington, was "fomented by combinations of men" who were "careless of consequences."[894] From a Federalist viewpoint, the management of future "consequences" guaranteed order in the present by containing the proliferation of chance; from the perspective of the rebels, "consequences" merely denoted the deleterious progress of history and the gradual degradation of liberty. As such, the causal structure of historical time subscribed to by Federalists, in which the decompressed transition from present to future supposedly precluded the sudden, unforeseeable collapse of constitutional authority, precluded the spontaneous exercise of liberty too. It prevented the reactualization of the "principles of 1776" – namely, the Revolution's spontaneous reallocation of sovereign power from constituted authority to constituent people – and contributed, in an American context, to similar sensations of the dread of duration that had motivated the Parisian sansculottes to take time into their own hands in August 1792.

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In late October 1794, faced with the overwhelming military force assembled by the President, the rebellion melted away. By personally leading the charge across the western frontier,

[892] Albert Gallatin, *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, ed., Henry Adams, (3 vols., Philadelphia, PA., J.B. Lippincott, 1879), III, p.18.
[893] Findley, *History of the Insurrection*, p.308.
[894] Washington, 'Sixth Annual Address to Congress, 19 November, 1794,' in John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. *The Writings of George Washington* (39 vols., Washington DC., United States Government Printing Office, 1931-44), XXXIV, pp.28-37.

Washington had deployed himself as the moving emblem of a Republic hopelessly out-of-synch. The sheer constancy of his presence – from the trenches of Valley Forge to the chair of the Constitutional Convention – meant that Washington was able to imbue the otherwise inchoate "history" of the Revolution with a narrative coherence.[895] To this end, he sometimes understood his role as that of an "actor" whose appearance on the "mighty scene" of the Revolution demanded that he "preserve a perfect constancy of character through to the very last act, to close the drama with applause."[896] It was only through this "perfect constancy" that the beginning, middle, and end of the "drama" could lead from one to the other and thus make sense. Washington made this statement during his first farewell to public life at Annapolis in 1783, when he had optimistically believed that the conclusion of the "mighty scene" of the American Revolution – namely, the war – had also brought the Revolution to the end of its "last act."[897] As the subsequent decade demonstrated, Washington was unable to abandon the stage without the sequential coherence of "American history" repeatedly deranging.[898]

To scan the several zones of time that spanned the American Republic in 1794 was to deduce that the revolutionary modality of historical time, far from returning to a sense of "constancy," had simply splintered. As a constant corporeal representation of the Revolution, Washington could incarnate the sovereign authority inaugurated by the Revolution whilst containing it within the stipulations of the Constitution.[899] In other words, Washington represented revolutionary spontaneity translated into constitutional constancy. In October 1791, the engraver Amos Doolittle captured the temporality of this mode of power in a presidential print, entitled 'A Display of the United States of America' [Fig. 10].[900] Fourteen interlocked rings, each representing a state of the Union and the crest of the Republic,

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[895] Similar arguments are forwarded in more detail in, Barry Schwartz, *George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol* (New York, NY., Free Press, 1987); and James Flexner, *George Washington and the New Nation, 1783-1793* (Boston, MA., Little and Brown, 1970).

[896] George Washington, 'General Orders, 18 April 1783,' held in, The George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress, 1741-1799, Series 3, Letterbook 7, image.128-29.

[897] See: Stanley Weintraub, *General Washington's Christmas Farewell: A Mount Vernon Homecoming, 1783* (New York, NY., Free Press, 2003); on Washington's vision of politics as theatre, see: Peter R. Henriques, *Realistic Visionary: A Portrait of George Washington* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2006), p.53; Paul K. Longmore, *The Invention of George Washington* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 1999), p.52; Don Higginbotham, *George Washington: Uniting a Nation* (Lanham, MD. Roman & Littlefield, 2004), p.60.

[898] It is even possible to say that his "collaborators," those who helped to construct a constitutional regime that derived its initial stability from the personal charisma and political cache of General Washington, also helped construct a saviour narrative in which Washington's presence was deemed to be the sole safeguard against chaos, the sole protection against the reacceleration of historical time; for the obvious Napoleonic parallels, see: Jean Tulard, *The Myth of the Saviour* (trans. Teresa Waugh), (London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984).

[899] On early portraiture of George Washington, see: Wendy C. Reaves, *George Washington, An American Icon: The Eighteenth-Century Graphic Portraits* (Washington, DC., Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service and the National Portrait Gallery, 1982); Ellen G. Miles, *George and Martha Washington: Portraits from the Presidential Years* (Washington, DC., Smithsonian Traveling Exhibition Service and the National Portrait Gallery, 1999); Catherine E. Kelly, *Republic of Taste: Art, Politics, and Everyday Life in Early America* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp.1-13.

[900] Donald C. O'Brien, *Amos Doolittle: Engraver of the New Republic* (New Castle, DE., Oak Knoll Press, 2008), p.57-66.

encircle the figure of Washington – "the protector of his country" – whose central, centripetal force keeps the rings in fixed rotation. Despite Doolittle's imagery, which vividly recalls the clock face, this visual metaphor of political authority did quite resemble clockwork. Rather, it is better to talk of Washington's temporal torque: by making manifest his personal authority, Washington could impress a single force upon the Union's disparate zones of time, around which they might rotate and be brought into a common developmental – that is, historical – momentum. In the present, time would need to move at a fixed rate if, in the future, these zones were to acquire some historical similitude. Thus, in 1791, Washington began a

Fig. 10. Amos Doolittle 'A Display of the United States of America' (1791) https://lccn.loc.gov/99400733

gruelling 1,900-mile journey across the inhospitable terrain of the new nation.[901] Undertaken at breath-taking pace, the President contrived to appear everywhere simultaneously. "Washington's presence," as David Waldstreicher notes, "exerted a centralizing pull," reassuring a vast, unwieldy Union that rested, above all else, "on sentiment."[902] This desire to impress upon the Republic the *simultaneity* of national "sentiment," despite its "geographical" dispersal, was further reinforced when Washington re-visited the celebrated sites of the Revolutionary War – from Philadelphia to Savannah, Lexington to Yorktown, – as if re-

[901] Richard Norton Smith, *Patriarch: George Washington and the new American nation* (Boston, MA., Houghton Mifflin, 1993), p.88; on Washington's precarious political legitimacy, see: Ricardo A. Herrera, 'George Washington, Popular Sovereignty, and the Legitimacy of Revolution,' in Ethan Fishman, William D. Pederson, Mark J. Rozell, *George Washington: Foundation of Presidential Leadership and Character* (Westport, CT., Praeger, 2001), pp.219-28.
[902] Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes*, p.119.

enrolling the people into the collective, ongoing, but now constitutionally-contained exercise of liberty.[903]

The presence, or torque, that Washington imparted upon the political interactions of the new nation was not therefore about bringing stasis or even balance; it was about imbuing the several states with a stable, interdependent historical momentum. It was for this reason that Washington, like many Federalists, felt so queasy about unrestricted spatial expansion, which threatened to stretch the *historical* distances of the Republic. In a letter to Randolph, written before the military expedition to quell the rebels, Washington argued that unless the separate "interests," the sentiments, of the separate states could be resynchronised, it would be impossible for the United States to cohere into a single history. But if this admittedly "distressing" despatch of Union forces could sustain "the pleasing spirit which it has drawn forth" – and which had flummoxed the insurgents, "who had no conception that such a spirit prevailed," – then the demonstration of both federal authority and fealty to the Union might "immortalize the American character," and provide "a happy presage" for obstructing the "future attempts of a certain description of people" who were determined to "sow the seeds of distrust & disturb the public tranquillity."[904] Following the election of Jefferson in 1800, this Washingtonian strategy of enabling the continental convergence of "sentiments" *in time* was discarded as unsustainable and deleterious to virtue and liberty. Instead, the purchase of the Louisiana territories by Jefferson in 1803 enabled the Republic to charter a different course: the replication of founding principles *across space*.[905]

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In such unstable circumstances, the linear transition towards the future became a political process in itself, one that Marcel Gauchet describes as the "obligatory temporal orientation" of the modern political regime, as "legitimacy converted into time," in which duration and

[903] T. H. Breen, *George Washington's Journey: The President Forges a New Nation* (New York, NY., Simon & Schuster, 2016), pp.108-9; on Washington and the creation of national, and particularly military, memory: Sarah J. Purcell, *Sealed with Blood: War, Sacrifice, and Memory in Revolutionary America* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), pp.97-98; Simon Newman, 'Principles or Men? George Washington and the Political Culture of National Leadership, 1776-1801,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 12 (4, Winter 1992), pp.477-507; see: Douglass Adair, 'Fame and the Founding Fathers,' in Trevor Colbourn, *Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays by Douglass Adair* (New York, NY., W. W. Norton, 1974), pp.3-36.

[904] George Washington to Edmund Randolph (16 October 1794), in Hoth, Ebel, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*. The Presidential Series, XVII, pp.72-73.

[905] These ideas of space and time after the Washington presidency will developed below; see: Peter J. Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 2004); Peter S. Onuf, 'The Expanding Union,' in David T. Konig, ed., *Devising Liberty: Preserving and Creating Freedom in the New American Republic* (Stanford, CA., Stanford University Press, 1995), pp.51-80; Thomas M. Allen, *A Republic in Time: Temporality and Social Imagination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 2008), pp.17-58; Marie-Jeanne Rossignol, 'La Louisiane en 1803: terre d'expansion, terre d'exploration, ou comment les sciences naturelles et la diplomatie se mêlent,' *Revue française d'études américaines* 48/49 (April-July 1991), pp.125-35; Major L. Wilson, *Space, Time, and Freedom: The Quest for Nationality and the Irrepressible Conflict, 1815-1861* (Westport, CT., Greewood Press, 1974), pp.22-30.

stability are maintained by regimes that are themselves seen to govern "a society containing its own ordering principle." The "legitimate obligation" of political authority is no longer "to renew what used to be," but rather "to create what does not yet exist and what ought to happen."[906] In the spring of 1801, the journal *La Décade Philosophique* could claim that the Consulate had taken control of "time," which "we used to devote to combating errors" and which seemed constantly to elapse, by implementing "projects of public utility" that now matured *with* time:

> Political news daily loses some of the pressing interest we used to feel when, each morning, we learned of some crime or conflict or read the announcement of a great law that had been conceived, drafted, and adopted in the space of fifteen minutes…Today, the most fervent of every party have adjusted to a new tranquillity.[907]

A similar phenomenon can be traced in post-revolutionary America. In 1796, in his *American Universal Geographer*, Jedidah Morse observed how, "[f]or several years after the establishment of the new constitution," and under the presidency of Washington in particular, "the United States were happily distinguished by affording few materials for history."[908] These regimes rejected the continuous breaking with the past by focusing their efforts upon the continual absorption of the future, a gentle process that, given sufficient time, would de-essentialise the legitimacy that revolutionary power had derived from historical rupture.

Thus the exercise of late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth century legitimate power was charged with "creating its own time," by the need to make time "the dimension of continuity." The regime of "continuity," as Pocock has argued, envisages its own future by "ensuring that no future ever comes into existence."[909] This claim, which might as easily characterise the static historicity of ancien regime legitimacy, requires contextualisation. The future of legitimate post-revolutionary power does not materialise – *at least as it is perceived* – because the injection, or "creation," of time de-abbreviates the temporal transit between the ontological realms of present and future, bringing about a sensation of historical decompression that, in turn, softens the experience of rupture.

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[906] Marcel Gauchet, *The Disenchantment of the World: A Political History of Religion* (trans. Oscar Burge), (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1997), p.176; Lucian Hölscher, 'Mysteries of Historical Order: Ruptures, Simultaneity and the Relationship of the Past, the Present and the Future,' and Constantin Fasolt, 'Breaking up Time – Escaping from Time: Self-Assertion and Knowledge of the Past,' in Bevernage, Lorenz, eds., *Breaking Up Time*, pp.134-54, 176-198.
[907] *La Décade Philosophique* (30 April, 1801), cited in Englund, *Napoleon*, p.194.
[908] Jedidiah Morse, *The American Universal Geography, or, A View of the Present State of all the Empires, Kingdoms, States, and Republics in the known World, and of the United States of America in particular. In two parts* (3rd Edition, Boston, NJ., 1796), p.333.
[909] Pocock, 'Modes of Political and Historical Time,' p.92.

III. Meantime

American and French Revolutionaries had placed the relative lifespan of revolutionary regimes in direct proportion to their ethico-political nefariousness. "If suicide or exile became signs of political 'purity,'" during the Thermidorian Republic, observes Jean-Luc Chappey, then "conversely, political duration often appeared suspicious."[910] By devising rhetorical and performative strategies designed to decompress the sequential speed of revolutionary historical experience, Washington and Napoleon set about creating *meantime*.[911] The lived experience of the present was opened up and expanded from within – time underwent dilation; the transition period between present and future also underwent a process of temporal blending, which reintroduced a common sense of duration adequate to the human capacity for processing information and gathering experience. Even institutions and constitutions intended to create duration could not, in the immediate term, gain enough time to survive the headwinds of chance. Meantime, which became structurally dependent upon the political performances, upon the persons, of Washington and Napoleon, provided the new regimes with a kind of time buffer, producing an artificial sense of duration that, in the immediate term, enabled the maturation of duration-creating institutions.

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In 1792, as Washington traversed America, Jefferson wrote him a despairing letter. The "division of sentiment and interest happens unfortunately to be so geographical," sighed Jefferson, that the "confidence of the whole union is centred in you." "North and South," hopelessly divided by political economies and historical trajectories, "will hang together, if they have you to hang on to." If forthcoming legislative elections did not return "a numerous representation" of sympathetic republicans, what Jefferson termed "the first corrective," then "your presence," he told Washington, "will *give time* for trying others not inconsistent with the union and peace of the states."[912]

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[910] Jean-Luc Chappey, 'Les ideologues face au coup d'État du 18 brumaire an VIII,' *Politix* 56 (14, 2001), pp.55-75, here: p.55: "Si le suicide ou l'exil deviennent les signes de la 'pureté' politique, à l'inverse, la durée politique apparaît souvent comme suspecte."

[911] 'Meantime' differs from Benedict Anderson's 'meanwhile,' *Imagined Communities*, pp.24-25, since it was intended to overcome the absence of simultaneity that undermined the energetic exercise of power.

[912] Thomas Jefferson to George Washington (23 May 1792), in Charles T. Cullen, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (40 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1990), XXIII, pp.539. Washington would wait more than a month, until 10 July, before responding to Jefferson, so determined was he to resist calls to serve a second term; the structural integrity of the Republic, however, was dependent upon his continuation as president, dependent upon his ability to "give time" to America to settle its yet recent institutions and practices of political power: Thomas Jefferson, 'Notes of a Conversation with George Washington, 10 July 1792,' in Catanzariti, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, XXIV, pp.210-12.

To "*give time*" to the Republic was also the self-proclaimed purpose of the president – it underwrote the immediate-term exercise of post-revolutionary political power. In his Farewell Address, first published in September of 1796, and then disseminated throughout the nation, Washington declared:

> With me a predominant motive has been to endeavour to *gain time* to our country, to settle and mature its yet recent institutions, and to progress without interruption to that degree of strength and consistency which is necessary to give it, humanly speaking, the command of its own fortunes.[913]

If the creation of the American Republic demanded the "interruption" of revolution, then the need to "settle and mature" the Republic was a process that could only be realised in an *uninterrupted*, progressive stream of time. Whilst the Constitution could create duration, punctuating the breathless grammar of American political discourse, it had also undergone several body blows in the first few years of the new regime, notably along the western frontier.[914] The radicalisation of the French Revolution also sent reverberations through the nascent constitutional regime. In 1793, Edmond-Charles Genêt, the French ambassador, arrived in Charleston, South Carolina, where he began rallying extra-constitutional sentiment, particularly amongst the Democratic-Republican societies, in favour of breaking American neutrality in the war between France and Great Britain.[915] Popular "passions" resurfaced.[916] John Adams would later "the terrorism excited by Genêt," when "ten thousand people in the streets of Philadelphia, day after day, threatened to drag Washington from his house." In fact, it was only the chance epidemic of "yellow fever," which swept the city in the autumn, claiming more than five thousand lives, "that Saved the United States from total Revolution of Government."[917]

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[913] Washington, 'Farewell Address' (19 September 1796), in Fitzpatrick, ed., *The Writings of George Washington*, XXXV, p.237, emphasis added; Matthew Spalding, 'The Command of Its Own Fortunes: Reconsidering Washington's Farewell Address,' in Fishman, Pederson, Rozell, eds., *George Washington: Foundation of Presidential Leadership and Character*, pp.19-32.

[914] Roger V. Gould, 'Political Networks and the Local/National Boundary in the Whiskey Rebellion,' in Michael P. Hanagan, Leslie Page Moch, Wayne te Brake, eds., *Challenging Authority: The Historical Study of Contentious Politics* (Minneapolis, MN., University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp.34-51.

[915] Jeffrey S. Selinger, *Embracing Dissent: Political Violence and Party Development in the United States* (Philadelphia, PA., University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), pp.54-82; T. C. W. Blanning, *The Origins of the French Revolutionary Wars* (Harlow, Longman, 1986); Washington once again admonished the extra-constitutional "mischief" of these "self-created societies": nothing could "be more absurd – more arrogant – or more pernicious to the peace of Society, that for self created bodies, forming themselves into *permanent* Censors…to form *their will* into Laws for the government of the whole": George Washington to Burgess Ball (25 September 1794), in Hoth, Ebel, eds., *The Papers of George Washington*. Presidential Series, XVI, pp.722-24.

[916] The Philadelphian poet, Philip Freneau, published an anonymous pamphlet in 1793, entitled *The funeral dirge of George Washington and James Wilson, king and judge*, in which he outlined the execution by guillotine of the president; see: Marcus Leonard Daniel, *Scandal & Civility: Journalism and the Birth of American Democracy* (Oxford, OUP, 2009), p.105.

[917] John Adams to Thomas Jefferson (30 June, 1813), in Looney, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson.* Retirement Series (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Pres, 2009), VI, pp.254; on the yellow fever outbreak in Philadelphia in 1793, which Benjamin Rush attributed to the accidental distribution of boxes of rotten coffee: William Currie, *A Description of the Malignant Infectious Fever prevailing at present in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, PA., Thomas

The machinations of "citizen Genet" partly explain why Washington warned Americans against implicating themselves in the "vicissitudes" of European politics. By "interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe," he warned, America would "entangle" its "peace and prosperity" in the "rivalship," "interest," and "caprice" of outside events. "Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a reasonably defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies."[918] The construction of meantime, which became dependent upon the person of Washington, was meant to convey "strength" upon "yet recent institutions," limiting the sudden appearance of hazard and chance by investing the United States with "the command of its own fortunes." With time, chance itself would become governable. Washington had hoped, then, to affect a de-abbreviation in the spaces of historical experience, to decelerate the time of the nascent United States by trying to "gain" more of it. The presence of duration would force the historical planes of present and future to merge *in time*, enabling America to "progress without interruption" from the former to the latter. This, in turn, would create the time in which to accrue the historical experience necessary to provide stabilising ballast for the Republic's "recent institutions," in particular the legitimate practice of constitutional authority.

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Napoleonic statecraft, unlike Napoleonic warfare, sought to minimise – and not to instrumentalise – the prevalence of chance. This has often been depicted as control-freakery, if not outright despotism. Yet, as Philip Dwyer – a scarcely sympathetic observer – has explained, the embrace of "heredity" as an organising political principle of the Napoleonic regime was not "a sop to Bonaparte's vanity and ambition," but an attempt to construct "a durable political system."[919] Nor was the elevation of Napoleon to Emperor a sudden or opportunistic move; it was incremental and largely improvised. Seldom is it noted, moreover, how initially reluctant Napoleon was to entertain extensions to his authority. He found the notion of heredity, for example, "absurd." Even "if it would secure the stability of the State, it is impossible nowadays in France," he told the *Conseil d'État* in August 1802; the Revolution

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Dobson, 1793); on the Genet mission, see: James Thomas Flexner, *Washington: The Indispensible Man* (New York, NY., New American Library, 1984), p.295-30; the best full-scale study is, Harry Ammon, *The Genet Mission* (New York, NY., W. W. Norton, 1973); see, also: William F. Keller, 'American Politics and the Genet Mission' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Pittsburgh, PA., University of Pittsburgh, 1951).

[918] On the presence of "timelessness" in the foreign policy rhetoric of the Address, see: Edward Pessen, 'George Washington's Farewell Address, the Cold War, and the Timeless National Interest,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 7 (1, Spring, 1987), pp.1-25; on space and "distance" as constitutive concepts of the Address, see: Michael J. Hostetler, 'Washington's Farewell Address: Distance as Bane and Blessing,' *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5 (3, Autumn, 2003), pp.393-407.

[919] Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, p.130.

had "swept away" the "whole range of institutions" that had supported the principle.[920] When, in 1801, he declared heredity impossible, since "I do not possess a child," he had to be told by his *conseiller*, Pierre-Louis Roederer, what its true purpose would be: "This provides security for the future."[921] It is a common, almost uncontested claim that the threats to the political order after Brumaire were the inventions of a cynical gang of apologists – collaborators, in effect – who were determined to justify the regime's repeated incursions into civil liberties by capitalising upon phantom threats.[922]

When Letizia Bonaparte was congratulated on the imperial elevation of her second son in 1804, she languidly replied: "*Oui. Pourvu que ça dur*" – "Yes. Provided it lasts."[923] Throughout the various iterations of the Napoleonic regime – from consulship to empire – there persisted a peculiar sensation of impermanence, a general suspicion that endurance was uncertain, that time was short. In the summer of 1802, Napoleon convened the *Conseil* to consider this fear of political ephemerality. Brumaire may have given France "a government and a source of authority," but the Revolution had reduced "the rest of the nation" to mere "grains of sand." Despite the "world of talk…during these last ten years about institutions," scarcely a single one had survived intact: with "no common aims, no system, no bond of union," it would take time to re-stabilise the nation, to "plant on the soil of France some masses of granite," and thereby guarantee the durability of the new political settlement. It simultaneously seemed pointless appealing to the people themselves since the nature of popular legitimacy was too irregular. "Do you think you can count on the people?" asked Napoleon; not at all – the changeability of constituent power meant that they were "as ready to shout '*Vive le Roi*' to-day as '*Vive la Ligue*' to-morrow!" In order "to turn them the right way" – to regulate the pace of political life – it was necessary to "have the proper institutions." For these institutions to become properly embedded, however, would require Napoleon to act as time buffer; it would require meantime. "As long as I am here I can

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[920] Thibaudeau, *Memoirs*, I, p.256.

[921] Pierre-Louis Roederer, *Bonaparte me disait: conversations, notées par le comte de P.-L. Roederer* (Paris, Horizons de France, 1942), p.26: "Je n'ai point d'enfant," remarked Napoleon, but "Il est possible de vous en donner un par l'adoption," replied Roederer: "Cela ne répond pas au danger du moment," the First Consul added, before Roederer corrected him: "Cela offre de la sécurité pour l'avenir." Extending the duration of the authority of First Consul would enable him to more adequately combat "what the future was likely to produce: Baron Pelet de la Lozère, *Napoleon in Council, or the Opinions delivered by Bonaparte in the Council of State* (trans. Basil Hall), (London, Whittake & Co., 1837), p.60.

[922] Isser Woloch, *Napoleon and His Collaborators: The Making of a Dictatorship* (New York, NY., W. W. Norton, 2001), pp.36-89; Malcolm Crook, *Napoleon Comes to Power: Democracy and Dictatoship in Revolutionary France, 1795-1804* (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 1998), pp.44-70; Alan Forrest, 'Policing, Rural Revolt and Conscription in Napoleonic France,' in Broers, Hicks, Guimera, eds., *The Napoleonic Empire*, pp.49-58.

[923] Roberts, *Napoleon*, p.356; Dorothy Carrington, 'Les Parents de Napoléon d'apres des documents inédits,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 242 (October-December 1980), pp.585-607; Philip Mansel, *The Eagle in Splendour: Inside the Court of Napoleon* (New York, NY., I. B. Tauris, 1987), pp.13-42; the relevant volume for Napoleon and his relations with the his mother during the time of the coronation is: Frédéric Masson, *Napoléon I^er^ et sa famille* (13 vols., Paris, Ollendorff, 1907), II.

answer for the Republic, but we must make provision for the future. Do you believe that the Republic is definitely established? If so, you are very much mistaken."

Expanding the meantime of the regime – which entailed an extension in the duration of the First Consul's authority – meant, as Napoleon observed, that, "we would have plenty of time before us." The circumstances under which Napoleon had "accepted the position of Supreme Magistrate did not allow sufficient time for calm consideration," he readily acknowledged: when the Republic was "rent asunder by civil commotion," and "the enemy threatened our frontiers," the "choice of the nation" might well have seemed "to be the sudden result of panic." But "today everything is changed."[924] In May 1802, Napoleon had established forty-five *lycées*, institutions that would produce the future soldiers, administrators, and technicians of the state. They were "the most important of all institutions," Napoleon boasted, "since everything depends upon it, the present and the future. It is essential that the morals and political ideas of the generation which is now growing up should no longer be dependent upon the news of the day or the circumstances of the present."[925] The treaties of Lunéville and Amiens, brokered in February 1801 with Austria and March 1802 with Britain respectively, had returned Europe to a state of peace and tranquillised French domestic politics.[926]

The peace, however, would prove precarious; and the inculcation of institutional stability would require time. It is perhaps for this reason that the constant quest for legitimacy coincided with the repeated extension in the lifespan of the regime. The consulship was first bestowed upon Napoleon for ten years, then for life, and then, under the empire, as a form of hereditary authority. The continuity of the regime was increasingly dependent upon the corporeality of Napoleon himself. The body of the First Consul was deployed to absorb the sense of imminent collapse still assailing the Republic. According to François-Louis Marguet, who penned a letter to the First Consul as a pseudonymous 'citizen from Besançon' several months before the coronation, the death of Napoleon would have been "a public calamity," since the "fatal day which takes you from the French people will also be the last day of their liberty and their happiness."[927]

For Roederer, who had already witnessed at first hand the disintegration of one political regime, this was intolerable.[928] "It is feared that the death of Bonaparte will happen

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[924] Thibaudeau, *Memoirs*, reports Napoleon's addresses to the *Conseil* on 4 August, 1802: I, p.268.
[925] Napoleon, cited in Hélie, marquis de Noailles, ed., *The Life and Memoirs of Count Molé (1781-1855)*, (2 vols., London, Hutchinson, 1923), I, p.61.
[926] Michael Rowe, 'France, Prussia, or Germany? The Napoleonic Wars and Shifting Allegiances in the Rhineland,' *Central European History* 39 (4, December 2006), pp.611-40; Englund, *Napoleon*, pp.253-54; Conrad Gill, 'The Relations between England and France in 1802,' *English Historical Review* 24 (January 1909), pp.61-78.
[927] Dwyer, 'Napoleon and the Foundation of the Empire,' p.352.
[928] Pierre-Louis Roederer was a true revolutionary survivor, serving monarchical, republican, consular and imperial and restoration regimes: Kenneth Margerison, 'P.-L. Roederer: Political Thought and Practice during the French Revolution,' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 73 (1, 1983), pp.1-166; George Bourgin,

at any time, that it will happen prematurely, and that it will be hastened by crime."[929] In this event, the regime would crumble: as one Bonapartist pamphleteer observed, France would once again be left to hurtle through historical time with neither guidance nor guardianship, "stumbling rapidly from error to error."[930] The post-revolutionary French state was still encased in scaffolding: "Nothing is yet firmed up," observed Roederer: "A hundred things have only been knocked together. A hundred other things are not yet prepared. There are barely any institutions. Barely any habits are yet developed or rooted."[931] So long as France was bereft of time-tested institutions and remained dependent upon the lifespan of the First Consul, she would continue to exist within a regime of chance. "[S]he distrusts her own fortune," lamented Roederer, for although France was "surrounded by happy circumstances, her state [was] not one of happiness." The political prospects of the nation remained too saturated by contingency, since "barely having averted the precipice…she fears seeing yet another before her." France, Roederer observed,

> pressed between the too recent memories of the past and fears for the future, only sees in her ascent the danger of collapse. She asks for a barrier between herself and the abyss, a support, an aid at the summit of her glory.

By "conserving the First Consul," by making his appointment permanent, "the institution would leave assurances for the future." Time would no longer be the medium of rupture; rather, the Consulship for Life "would give *to time* the means of reforming itself."[932]

Constructing the political symbolism of the Napoleonic regime was smash-and-grab operation. At various times and to varying degrees, Napoleon mimicked Caesarean, Carolingian and even Bourbon models and motifs of power, as and when circumstances demanded.[933] The coronation was perhaps the most visible demonstration of the instability

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'Un témoin de la Révolution: Roederer,' *Revue historique* 188 (1940), pp.259-70; Jean-Luc Chappey, 'Pierre-Louis Roederer et la Presse sous le Directoire et le Consulat: L'opinion publique et les enjeux d'une politique éditoriale,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 334 (October-December 2003), pp.1-21.

[929] Pierre-Louis Roederer, *Journal du Comte P.–L. Roederer, Ministre et Conseiller d'Etat. Notes intimes et politiques d'un familier des Tuileries* (Paris, H. Daragon, 1909), p.136: "On craint la mort de Bonaparte à quelque époque qu'elle arrive, on craint surtout qu'elle n'arrive prématurément, et qu'elle ne soit hâtée par le crime."

[930] Jean Chas, *Réflexions sur l'hérédité du pouvoir souverain* (Paris, chez les Marchands de Nouveautés, 1804), p.55: "la France qui marchoit rapidement d'erreurs en erreurs."

[931] Roederer, *Journal*, p.136: "Rien n'est encore affermi. Cent choses ne sont qu'ébauchées. Cent autres ne sont pas même encore préparées. Presque point d'institutions. Point encore d'habitudes prises et enracinées."

[932] Roederer, *Journal*, p. 135: "La France renaissante étonne le monde entier de sa gloire; toute semble revivre en elle, autour d'elle; tout semble se mouvoir par elle et pour elle; et cependant, elle n'a pas encore le sentiment intime de son existence nouvelle; elle est environnée de circonstances heureuses, et son état n'est pas le bonheur; sa sûreté paraît être bien établie, et elle n'est pas en sécurité. Un sentiment inquiet s'élève du sein de sa gloire même: elle se défie de sa fortune, elle craint de s'y livrer; à peine sortie du précipice dont l'idée la poursuit, elle croit en voir un autre devant elle," "serrée entre les souvenirs trop récents du passé et des craintes pour l'avenir, elle ne regarde son élévation que comme le danger d'une chute. Elle demande une barrière au-devant du gouffre, un soutien, un appui au sommet de la gloire," p.185-6: "D'ailleurs, en conservant le Premier Consul, l'institution laisserait des assurances pour l'avenir; elle donnerait au temps le moyen de la réformer elle-même." Emphasis added.

[933] Robert Morrissey, 'Charlemagne et le légende imperiale,' in Jean-Claude Bonnet, ed., *L'Empire des muses: Napoléon, les arts et les lettres* (Paris, Belin, 2004), p.331-47; Thomas Biskup, 'Napoleon's Second Sacre? Iéna

and artifice of Napoleonic political legitimacy.[934] At the centre of the ceremony was the coronation oath, or *sacre*, a divine anointment that Napoleon entertained – probably in the hope of appeasing Catholic sentiment – whilst nevertheless reaffirming the secular essence of the French state; the Pope, meanwhile, had little more than a walk on part: Napoleon would crown himself.[935] Under the oxymoronic title, "Emperor of the French Republic," he pledged to "maintain the integrity of the territory of the Republic" and the "irrevocability of the sale of national lands."[936] The Revolutionary past was finally consolidated under the aegis of a new institution: the Empire. Unlike the Republic, however, the Empire was borne not of rupture, but instead attempted to span multiple continuities. The legitimacy of the Empire was anti-ruptural: it wilfully and opportunistically claimed continuity with multiple historical timelines: "from Clovis to the Committee of Public Safety," Napoleon slyly remarked, "I feel solidarity with them all."

The coronation performance, however, was perfunctory. Napoleon seemed bored by the proceedings – the duchesse d'Abrantès even claimed to have seen him "several times check a yawn."[937] For those who braved the cold, ecclesiastical air of Notre Dame on 2 December 1804, the vortex of historical reference points was both bewildering and intoxicating.[938] "The past, the present and the future," observed the young artillery commander, Jean-François Boulart, "seemed to simultaneously absorb my thoughts, and to hold my mind in a sort of fascination." The ceremony, which was "so extraordinary, and which seemed to us so pregnant with the future," seemed to offer assurances for the present.[939]As the ceremony concluded, d'Abrantès approached the Emperor to recount how

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and the Ceremonial Translation of Frederick the Great's Insignia in 1807,' in Forrest, Wilson, eds., *The Bee and the Eagle*, pp.172-90.

[934] The best surveys of the coronation remains Fréderic Masson, *Le sacre et le couronnement de Napoléon* (Paris, Société d'éditions littéraires et artistiques, 1908), and the essays contained in Thierry Lentz, ed., *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (Paris, Nouveau Monde éditions, 2003).

[935] Lewis Rayapen, Gordon Anderson, 'Napoleon and the Church,' *International Social Science Review* 66 (3, Summer 1991), pp.117-27.

[936] AN AF/IV/1031:'Le procès-verbal de la cérémonie du sacre et du couronnement de l'empereur Napoléon et l'impératrice Joséphine': "Je jure de maintenir l'intégrité du territoire de la République; de respecter et de faire respecter les lois du concordat et la liberté des cultes; de respecter et faire respecter l'égalité des droits, la liberté politique et civile, irrévocabilité des ventes des biens nationaux." On Napoleon and the *biens nationaux*, see: Blandine Maurel, 'Vente de Biens Nationaux et Popularité de l'Empereur,' *Revue d'histoire économiques et sociale* 53 (2, 1975), pp.428-35; Gabriele B. Clemens, 'Gros Acheteurs et Spéculateurs dans les ventes aux enchères de biens nationaux dans les départements rhénans à l'époque napoléonienne,' *Annales historiques de la Révolution française* 314 (October-December 1998), pp.669-74.

[937] Duchesse d'Abrantès in, Oliver Bernier, Katell le Bourhis, eds., *Memoirs of the Duchesse d'Abrantès* (London, Doubleday, 1989), p.263.

[938] The iconography of the coronation, meanwhile, in particular the selection of the bumblebee as the insignia of the Bonaparte house, a symbol of industriousness, was scattered through the Cathedral, seemingly without system: Masson*, Le sacre*, p.68; Theresa M. Kelley, 'J. M. W. Turner, Napoleonic Caricature, and Romantic Allegory,' *ELH* 58 (2, Summer 1991), pp.351-82.

[939] Jean-François Boulart, *Mémoires (1792-1815) du général d'artillerie baron Boulart* (Paris, Tallendier, 1992), p.126: "Le passé, le présent, l'avenir, absorbaient presque simultanément la pensée, et tenait l'esprit dans une sorte de fascination," p.125: "Je n'en ai pas moins été très satisfait et flatté d'avoir assisté, en qualité de témoin convoqué, à une cérémonie si grande, si bien ordonnée, si extraordinaire, et qui nous paraissait alors si pleine d'avenir."

her husband, general Jean-Andoche Junot, had once described Napoleon *armé*. "He is one of those men whom Nature creates sparingly, and who appear in the world now and then, in the lapse of ages."[940] Under the Napoleonic Empire, the history of the present was crammed with the histories of the past; and, much like the battlefield comportment of Napoleon, the Empire – until it could acquire an historical resonance of its own – was forced to exist within "the lapse of ages," leaping promiscuously from century to century, accruing historical experience here, dispensing with it once superfluous.

The self-representations of the Napoleonic regime were therefore designed to re-normalise political duration and to repudiate the ephemerality of revolutionary constructions of legitimacy. A week after the coronation, Dominique Vivant-Denon, the director-general of museums and another primary propagandist of the regime, called upon French artists to immortalize "the tableau of the oath" so that it might implant itself in the national memory "until a distant epoch!"

> Painters of the French school, may your art compensate us for the rapidity of so many august and moving scenes. Prolong in our memories the hours, the moments that call to mind so many years; your paintbrushes could not depict with the same success the many festivals that happened amidst the storms of the Revolution, and within which so often those storms were prepared. The canvas had barely taken on the outline of the success of one of these festivals before its popularity…was stripped from it by the same impetuous inconstancy.[941]

Unlike revolutionary self-representation, which had concentrated "so many years" into "hours," the purpose of imperial aesthetics was to "compensate" France for the passing "rapidity" of previous political regimes. By prolonging the memory of the coronation oath, the foundational "moment" of the Empire, the present of the regime might coordinate its future,

This was easier said that done. If the political instability of revolutionary government had, in part, derived from the asymmetrical dynamics of time and history, then in a regime of reordered historical time it would be destabilising to accrue historical experience at an

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[940] d'Abrantès, *Memoirs*, p.266.

[941] 'Variétés,' *Gazette nationale ou Le Moniteur universel* 76 (16 frimaire l'an XIII; 7 December, 1804), (31 vols., Paris, H. Agasse, 1804), p.275: "Que le tableau du serment de l'Empereur occupe long-tems et profondément le génie des artistes! Qu'il ne paraisse qu'à une époque reculée!," "Peintres de l'école française, que votre art nous dédommage de la rapidité de tant de scènes augustes et touchantes. Prolongez dans nos souvenirs des heures, des instans qui rappelaient tant d'années : vos pinceaux ne purent s'exercer avec le même succès sur les fêtes nombreuses qui furent données au milieu des orages de la révolution, et dans lesquelles souvent des orages se préparent. La toile avait à peine reçu les traits des triomphateurs de l'une de ces fêtes, que déjà sa popularité, qui avait été exagérée par un parti, lui était enlevée par ce parti même dans sa fougueuse inconstance." On the artistic and propagandistic efforts of the Napoleonic regime, see: Philippe Bordes, 'La fabrication de l'histoire par Jacques-Louis David,' in *Triomphe et mort du héros: la peinture d'histoire en Europe de Rubens à Manet* (Lyon, Musée des Beaux Arts de Lyon, 1988), pp.110-19; Annie Jourdan, 'Napoleon and his artists: in the grip of reality,' in Brown, Miller, eds., *Taking Liberties*, pp.185-204; David O'Brien, *After the Revolution: Antoine-Jean Gros, Painting and Propaganda Under Napoleon* (Philadelphia, PA., Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

accelerated temporal rate. The purpose of meantime, therefore, was to ensure political continuity whilst the space of experience re-expanded. This would also protect the slowly strengthening historicity of the new regime by subordinating the logic of rupture to the accumulation of historical experience and, consequently, the solidification of new institutions. Over the course of this meantime, Napoleon contended, the people would therefore "have had time to test by *actual experience* the results of their choice," unmolested by unforeseen events.[942] The fog of hazard began to lift over the horizon of expectation. In a proclamation issued in August 1801, Napoleon hailed the Code Civil as a document that had been carefully "matured [*mûri*] by the sage slowness of deliberations." Unlike the legal steeplechase that was revolutionary legislative deliberation, where laws were sometimes devised, realised, and revised all in the same day, the apparent "slowness" with which the Code "matured" offered certain guarantees. As a consequence, it would "be the safeguard of your prosperity *for a long time*." The prospect of transhistorical certainty, the knowledge that laws devised yesterday would govern legal interactions tomorrow, offered the prospect of happiness: "[e]njoy," the proclamation concludes, "enjoy your position, your glory, and your aspirations for the future."[943]

Motifs of legitimacy became obsolete once they ceased to serve the purpose of meantime. Appeals to Charlemagne, for example, festooned the loyal addresses delivered to Napoleon upon the announcement of the imperial coronation. According to the citizens of Le Marne, a ceremony "that must inaugurate a great Emperor, a new Charlemagne," would also invest France "with the hopes of a happy future."[944] Once the glorious achievements and military conquests of the present superseded those of the past, however, Charlemagne gradually fell out of the Napoleonic repertoire of legitimising metonyms. After 1806, plans for a monument at the Place de Vendôme in honour of the Frankish king were replaced by proposals for a bronze-clad column, fabricated from captured enemy cannon, and eventually completed in 1810, to celebrate the victory of Austerlitz. "[W]e no longer have need of the illusions of centuries to search in the past for the heroes of France," Vivant-Denon explained

[942] Thibaudeau, *Memoirs*, reports Napoleon's address to the *Conseil* on 11 May, 1802: I, p.229.
[943] Napoleon Bonaparte, 'Proclamation (Paris, 7 fructidor an 9; 24 August 1801),' in *Œuvres de Napoléon Bonaparte* (6 vols., Paris, Panckoucke, 1821-22), III, pp.232-33: "Vous la célébrez aujourd'hui sous de plus heureux auspices…Un Code civil, mûri par la sage lenteur des discussions protégera vos propriétés et vos droits…Enfin une dure, mais utile expérience, vous garantit du retour des dissensions domestiques, et sera long-temps la sauve-garde de votre prospérité. Jouissez, Français, jouissez de votre position, de votre gloire et des espérances de l'avenir."
[944] AN. AF/IV/1030: "[un cérémonie] qui doivent inaugurer un grand empereur, un nouveau Charlemagne, à la France, avec l'éspérance [sic] d'un heureuse avenir tant pour le Prince, que pour le Peuple." See, also: Jean Chas, *Parallèle de Bonaparte le Grand avec Charlemagne* (Paris, 1803); Chas sent his work to Jefferson in May 1803, hoping that the president might circulate amongst his colleagues: Jean Chas to Thomas Jefferson (7 May, 1803), in Barbara B. Oberg, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (40 vols., Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 2013), XL, p.327-28.

to Napoleon in March 1806.[945] In this sense, Charlemagne was a temporal placeholder, a site of spectacular, if illusory commemoration that, before the Napoleonic regime could establish itself in time, counterbalanced the "rapidity" of revolutionary legitimacy and imbued the Empire with an historicity that, *in the meantime*, it palpably lacked.

It was the lingering fear that time was short – a habit of thought borne by the experience of revolution – that influenced the activity of the regime. The work-time discipline of the *Conseil* mimicked Napoleon's own extraordinary industriousness. Under the force of his hyperactivity, meetings regularly lasted ten or more hours, often not concluding until sunrise. Napoleon hurried and harried his advisers: the *conseiller d'état* responsible for roads and bridges, Emmanuel Crétet, was frequently taken to task about the deadlines of the various *grands projets* – "Where are we with the Arc de Triomphe?" – "Will I walk on the Jena bridge on my return?"[946] Jacques-Louis David captured on canvas this irrepressible capacity for work in 'The Emperor Napoleon in his Study at the Tuileries' (1812). In this portrait, meantime is nighttime: Napoleon toils to candlelight, drafting decrees and laws – the Code Napoléon lies unfurled on his bureau – whilst the French slumber. The tall-case clock behind him reads 4.13am: Napoleon maximises the value of every minute of the day, even shirking sleep so that France may be securely governed – that it may "gain time" on the forces of disorder arraigned against it.[947] "You have indeed caught me this time, David," crowed Napoleon at the unveiling: "At night I work for the welfare of my subjects; in the daytime for their glory." Time was being put to administrative use; it had ceased to be a medium of chaos: "For three years," observed Roederer in 1802, Napoleon was "in charge of everything; he governed, he administered, he negotiated," giving "each every day eighteen hours of solid work." "He has governed more in three years than kings do in a century."[948]

The implication, of course, was that the time of the regime was never "empty." "In order to astonish France," Napoleon once told Roederer, "I must constantly do."[949] This invested the regime with a sense of momentous continuity. Warfare was central.[950] "Victories

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[945] AN. AF/IV/1050: "La pensée de l'Institut qui est bien sûrement celle de la nation est que nous n'avons plus besoin de l'illusion des siècles pour chercher dans le passé le héros de la France."
[946] Roberts, *Napoleon*, p.283; Emmanuel Crétet outlined the architectural proposals for the Empire, in 'Exposé de la situation de l'Empire française: 1806 et 1807,' *Recueil des lettres circulaires, instructions, programmes, discours et autres actes publics, Émanés en 1807 du Ministre de l'Intérieur* (Paris, l'Imprimerie nationale, 1808), VII, pp.237-75; on building projects under the Empire, see: Guy Arbellot, 'Les problèmes de la route française à l'entrée du XIXe siècle,' *Histoire, Économie et Société* 9 (1, 1990), pp.9-17; on architectural styles, see: Albert Boime, *Art in an Age of Bonapartism, 1800-1815. A social history of modern art* (Chicago IL., University of Chicago Press, 1990).
[947] On David as Napoleonic propagandist: Laban Carrick-Hill, *A Brush With Napoleon: An Encounter with Jacques-Louis David* (New York, NY., Watson Guptill, 2007); Philippe Bordes, *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile* (New Haven, CT., Yale University Press, 2005), pp.19-124.
[948] Roederer, *Journal*, p.140: "Depuis trois années, [Napoléon]…est à la tête de tout; il gouverne, il administre, il négocie; il donne chaque jour dix-huit heures de travail […]. Il a plus gouverné en trois ans que les rois en cent années."
[949] Englund, *Napoleon*, p.306;
[950] Dallas D. Irvine, 'The French Discovery of Clausewitz and Napoleon,' *Journal of the American Military Institute* 4 (3, Autumn 1940), pp.143-61.

which are past soon cease to strike the imagination," Napoleon told Thibaudeau, and though he wished "to multiply the works of peace," in "the present nothing is so resonant as military success." This was "an unfortunate position," he admitted, but also an inevitable one: "a new-born Government like ours can only be solidified by dazzling and astonishing the world."[951] Continuous warfare showered the regime in military glory and reconfirmed its historical bias: a present securitised by the certain knowledge of future glory. As Robert Morrissey has deftly argued, the Napoleonic Empire developed an "economy of glory," which orientated the French towards the future since the active accumulation of *gloire*[952] relied upon "mechanisms of emulation."[953] Once again, an institution – the *Légion d'honneur* – was devised to dispense titles, benefactions, "baubles," all of which primed this "economy," and imbued political participation in the present, as Morrissey phrases it, with a "logic of fleeing forward."[954] The *Légion* displaced the precepts of tradition with a future-facing, meritocratic "practice of glory," which contributed towards the concealment of the transparent historicity of the nascent regime.[955] As General Pelleport, the first recipient of the *Légion*, observed: "Certainly, I would be proud and happy to descend from the generous citizens who managed to maintain their titles nationally, just as we have acquired ours on the field of battle – but it is not to be: *I date only from myself*."[956] Napoleon hoped to create the sense of durability once characteristic of the old regime without actually recreating the ancien regime: a new old regime, in effect, one that dated from the present. If Thibaudeau could fret that the *Légion* was "ostensibly founded as destructive to the old noblesse," but that it might "soon produce a new noblesse which would rehabilitate the old," then he had clearly not contemplated the parvenu swagger of a regime bolstered by the pursuit of glory – a swagger summed up by the low-born General Lefèbvre-Desnoëttes, who, during a *soirée* at the imperial court, offered a rebuke to one of the *grand seigneur* of the ancien regime: "You are only proud because you

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[951] Thibaudeau, *Memoirs*, p.120.
[952] On militarism and glory, see: Michael J. Hughes, *Forging Napoleon's Grande Armée: Motivation, Military Culture and Masculinity in the French Army, 1800-1808* (New York, NY., New York University Press, 2012), pp.51-78.
[953] Morrissey, *The Economy of Glory*, p.91; A focus on the attainment of glory enabled individuals to "disengage" from "immediacy, from the contingencies of the moment, and from the lure of appetites as well as instincts, writes Morrissey: "For the concept of glory enables those of us too burdened by the present to imagine, by way of our own esteem for those who have preceded us, the consideration and praise of those to come. It is by leaving the present, through a projection of the self in time, that we accede to a moral grandeur and a rationality that are different from those of the present": p.67.
[954] Robert Morrissey, Tristan Brossat, Paul Garapon, Olivier Mongin, Marc-Olivier Padis, 'Napoléon et la légitimité politique moderne: À propos de "Napoléon et l'héritage" de la gloire,' *Esprit* 377 (August-September 2011), pp.19-28.
[955] As Roederer observed, the honours distributed by the *Légion* "supersedes the old hereditary distinctions which placed inherited above self-acquired glory, and raised the descendants of great men above great men themselves," cited in Thibaudeau, *Memoirs*, I, p.147.
[956] Pierre de Pelleport, *Souvenirs militaires et intimes du général de victomte de Pelleport, de 1793 à 1853* (2 vols., Paris, Didier, 1857), I, p.4: "Certes, je serais fier et heureux de descendre de généreux citoyens ayant su maintenir nationalement leurs titres, comme nous avons conquis les nôtres sur les champs de bataille, mais il n'en est rien: *je ne date que de moi*."

have ancestors: so what! I *am* an ancestor!"[957] The *Légion* did not look backwards to "the revival of old prejudices," it was designed to orientate the Empire towards a future garlanded in glory, and away from the mere "circumstances of the present."[958]

As the Empire expanded and battlefield engagements grew gargantuan, however, the ancestor-less Napoleonic regime increasingly became strategically and structurally dependent upon military glory. War – that colossal game of chance – could never produce certainty; the frontiers of the nascent Empire thus remained prey to military incursion. And recently established satellite regimes, institutions borne by war, could also be flattened by war.[959] In this context, as Metternich observed, the campaign on Russia in 1812 looked like "the *va banque* of a gambler maddened by former gains."[960] *Va banque*, a term derived from the eighteenth-century card game Pharo, referred to a participant who, by placing their entire stake into play, may win – or lose – everything.[961] The regime, of course, had always seemed governed by this sense of chance. Napoleon had attempted to drain the unpredictability of revolutionary politics – and had largely succeeded – by tying the legitimacy of the empire to its military conquests.[962] Napoleonic militarism was akin to a displacement technique: chance was exported to a continent in the form of constant warfare. In 1800, for example, as an exhausted British public watched France convulse itself through yet another experiment in revolutionary government, Pitt characterised the new First Consul as "this last adventurer in the lottery of Revolutions."[963] By 1809, Dorothea Schlegel could survey a continent that had been made a hostage to the newly unpredictable experience of history: "I feel like I am watching the most diabolical card tricks."[964]

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[957] Joachin Ambert, *Esquisses historiques, psychologiques et critiques de l'Armée française* (Bruxelles, Librairie Militaire de J.-B. Petit, 1840), p.19: "Vous êtes fier parce que vous avez des ancêtres: eh bien! moi, *je suis un ancêtre*!"

[958] Thibaudeau's complaints were made before the bill creating the *Légion* was placed before the *Corps législatif*, on 15 May 1802: *Memoir*, I, p.146.

[959] Mark Jarrett, *The Congress of Vienna and Its Legacy: War and Great Power Diplomacy After Napoleon* (London, I. B. Tauris, 2013), pp.43-68; Janet Hartley, 'Russia and Napoleon: State, Society and the Nation,' in Rowe, ed., *Collaboration and Resistance*, pp.186-202; on the politicization of culture as a consequence of the French Revolution, both during and after the Napoleonic era, see: Warren Roberts, *Rossini and Post-Napoleonic Europe* (Rochester, NY., University of Rochester Press, 2015), pp.95-123.

[960] Prince Richard Metternich, ed., *Memoirs of Prince Metternich, 1773-1835* (trans. Mrs Alexander Napier), (5 vols., London, Richard Bentley & Son, 1880-1882), III, p.155.

[961] On the cultures of gambling in France during this period, see: John Dunkley, *Gambling: A Social and Moral Problem in France, 1685-1792* (Oxford, Voltaire Foundation, 1985); Francis Freundlich, *Le Monde de jeu à Paris: 1715-1800* (Paris, A. Michel, 1995); Thomas M. Kavanagh, *Enlightenment and the Shadows of Chance: The Novel and the Culture of Gambling in Eighteenth-Century France* (Baltimore, MD., Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993); Olivier Grussi, *La vie quotidienne de joueurs sous l'ancien régime à Paris et à la cour* (Paris, Hachette, 1985); in America, see: Mark Schmeller, 'The Political Economy of Opinion: Public Credit and Concepts of Public Opinion in the Age of Federalism,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 29 (Spring, 2009), pp.35-61.

[962] Morrissey, *Economy of Glory*, pp.89-114; Connelly, *Blundering to Glory*, pp.231-34.

[963] William Pitt, House of Commons (3 February, 1800), in William Woodfall, ed., *The Parliamentary Register; or, an impartial report of the debates that occur in the two Houses of Parliament* (33 vols., London, T. Gillet, 1794-1803), II, p.44.

[964] Schlegel further observed how, "Time has now become so fluidly rapid," that it was "not possible to keep up; between one mail day and the other lies an entire historical epoch": cited in, Fritzsche, *Stranded in the Present*, p.93.

Whether trick or bet, as the cards repeated failed to fall in Napoleon's favour the sense of chance that Napoleonic warfare had once carried across Europe began rebounding on the regime itself. The distant disaster of the Russian campaign rekindled the viability of speculation.[965] At 4am on 23 October 1812, General Malet, an inveterate conspirator and opponent of the regime, appeared at the Popincourt barracks. Napoleon was dead, he declared, killed at the hands of a Cossack beneath the walls of Moscow; the Senate had dissolved the Empire; a new provisional government was in place, and the soldier was to announce its fealty to the new regime.[966] For less than twenty-four hours, the conspirators took control of state ministries; soon, however, they found the levers of power inoperable. Anne-Jean Savary, duc de Rovigo, the minister of the Police-Générale, and Cambacérés, on behalf of the *Conseil*, could not verify the rumour of Napoleon's demise; yet they held their posts, carried out their duties, seemingly unmoved by the prospect that the Emperor may have perished in the Russian snow. The Empire, Broers observes, continued to "fly on auto pilot."[967] The sudden reappearance of chance, the non-curated circulation of verifiable knowledge, did not undermine the functioning capacity of the Empire: the crisis was simply absorbed by the well-tuned regularity, the sheer bureaucratic functionality, of the regime.[968] It was not until 6 November – two weeks after the coup – that Napoleon, in his approach to Smolensk, received news of its failure. Meantime had elapsed: the institutional framework of the Empire was now capable of outliving its Emperor.[969]

IV. Timebombs

"Twenty years will produce all the mischief that can be apprehended from the liberty to import slaves."[970] As early as 1787, James Madison had conceived of the institution of slavery

[965] Artom Guido, *Napoleon is Dead in Russia* (trans. Muriel Grindod), (New York, NY., Simon & Schuster, 1970), p.91; Bernardine Melchior-Bonnet, *La Conspiration du général Malet* (Paris, Del Duca, 1963), pp.25-51; David Gates, 'The Wars of 1812: A French Perspective,' *Mars & Clio* 34 (Summer 2012); Dominic Lieven, *Russia Against Napoleon: The Battle for Europe, 1807 to 1814* (London, Allen Lane, 2009), ch.14 outlines the disintegration of Napoleonic legitimacy in France.
[966] Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, pp.404-05.
[967] Broers, *Europe Under Napoleon*, p.263.
[968] Thierry Lentz, *La Conspiration du general Malet: 23 octobre 1812, premier ébranlement du trône de Napoléon* (Paris, Perrin, 2012).
[969] Philip Dwyer and Michael Broers reach diametrically opposed conclusions on this point: whilst both concur that the plot never represented a series threat to the regime, Dwyer insists that "what it demonstrated was people's loyalties remained with Napoleon, not with the Empire," which of course possessed an heir in Napoleon's son, the King of Rome; but as Broers points out: "Napoleon need not have divorced Josephine to produce an heir; he already had one in the Council of State": Dwyer, *Citizen Emperor*, p.405, and Broers, *Europe Under Napoleon*, p.263. I agree with Broers.
[970] James Madison before the Convention on 25 August, Jonathan Elliot, ed., *The Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution as Recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia in 1787* [*Elliot's Debates*] (6 vols., Washington, DC., 1836), V, p.477; John P. Kaminski, ed., *A Necessary Evil? Slavery and the Debate Over the Constitution* (Madison, WI., Madison House, 1995); Paul Finkelman, *Slavery and the Founders: Race and Liberty in the Age of Jefferson* (Armonck, NY., M. E. Sharpe, 2014), pp.193-236.

as a problem pregnant with future peril. During the Convention deliberations on the slave trade it had became increasingly evident that the southern delegates would never accept abolition. "The people of these states," remarked John Rutledge, "will never be such fools as to give up so important an *interest*."[971] The Constitution consequently offered a temporising compromise: Congress would be prevented from prohibiting the slave trade for twenty years. The slave question began to confuse the Federalist commitment to political duration: the decade immediately following the ratification of the Constitution saw more slaves imported into America than any other single decade of the eighteenth century.[972] The problem did not dissipate with delay. In 1787, George Mason told Convention that by allowing this "nefarious trade" to continue for "twenty odd years," the Constitution "adds daily to our weakness," endangering "our domestic safety," because, as he later observed, "the Western people are already calling out for slaves for their new land, and will fill that country with slaves if they can be got through South Carolina and Georgia."[973] The notion, then, that slavery, conceived as a problem of both morality and political economy, could be ameliorated across time was undermined the visible expansion of America across new territories. Despite the renewal of the Northwest Ordinance in 1789, which banned the importation of slaves, and the organisation of the Southwest Territory in 1790 with similar stipulations, the Washington administration could not contain the spread of slavery across the frontier.

Federalists, of course, were not averse to the continued territorial expansion of the American Republic. On the contrary, the cultivation of western land would strengthen the federal centre, but only if expansion was gradual: only if operated in accordance with, and not defiance of, the historical dynamics of the Republic.[974] Federalists envisaged a slow, robust territorialisation of the frontier. America would move millimetrically westward, purposefully pausing to oversee the systematic development of newly acquired territory, bringing these new lands into historical conformity with the seaboard states, and preventing the haphazard dispersal of peoples. Time would alter space.

Territorial expansion was not meant to bend the dynamics of historical time. The programme of the Jeffersonian Republicans, by contrast, repudiated Washington's vision whereby the nation inducted new territory into a commonly conceived historical time, one that would bind, not stretch the variegated "interests" of the Union. For Republicans, the

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[971] John Rutledge before the Convention on 22 August, 1787, in *Elliot's Debates*, V, p.460.
[972] Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders and Slaves in the Old South* (Madison, WI., University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), pp.11-46; Walter Berns, 'The Constitution and the Migration of Slaves,' *Yale Law Journal* 78 (December 1968), pp.198-228; the law prohibiting slave importation, passed in 1807, failed to prevent the slave trade entirely: William W. Freehling, 'The Founding Fathers and Slavery,' *American Historical Review* 77 (1, February 1972), pp.81-93, here: p.88.
[973] George Mason addressed the Convention on 11 June and 22 August, 1787: in Elliot, ed., *Elliot's Debates*, pp.269, V, p.458; on the slave trade debates at the Constitutional Convention and the state ratifying conventions, see: Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge, LA., Louisiana State University Press, 2000), pp.32-40.
[974] Cayton, *The Frontier Republic*, pp.15-25.

recourse to fresh land was meant to stymie the rapid development of a commercial republic – commonly conceived as a route towards political vice – by repeatedly replotting the virtuous rusticity prevalent in the revolutionary period.[975] The absorption of new territory replenished the wellspring of liberty. Space would alter time.[976]

In the wake of the Convention, this matter had never seemed more pressing. "In 1775, there was more patriotism in a village than is now in the 13 states," rued David Ramsay during the ratification debates.[977] A mere twelve years since independence and the momentum of liberty and virtue had stuttered to a halt. The intellectual underpinnings of the Jeffersonian programme for spatial expansion were derived from a classical-republican formula of the instability of virtue over time. When Jefferson contemplated the purchase of Louisiana in 1803, then, he began pondering the improbable: what if the "patriotism" that circulated amongst those "villages" of 1775 could be recreated on virgin land? What if the "moment" of independence could be endlessly repeated in space, and thus forever prevented from degrading? What if virtue could be placed beyond time?[978] Expansion through space might enable America to break "the closed cycle of virtue" that so assailed classical republican thought.[979] The virtue embedded within the historical "moment" of independence would thus be carried along the event horizon of spatial expansion, daily recreating itself and ceaselessly dragging the itinerary of American history back to its foundational political ethic. Thus, for Jefferson the "shape" of history was not strictly cyclical (and classical), nor was it linear (and modern): rather, it was pliable – the arrow of time bending back upon itself as it confronted the obstacle of space.[980]

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[975] In 1787, Noah Webster argued that people in "the early stage of their existence" were typically "industrious and frugal," but prosperity "inflates and debauches" them, so that "idleness and sensuality" would eventual spell their annihilation. Independence, although liberating in the immediate term, might also present a step towards empire, and empire a leap towards degeneration; the next leap would therefore need to be a sidestep: Americans had to establish a form of government that would "retard, if possible, and not accelerate the progress of corruption": *An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking* (Philadelphia, 1787), pp.214-15.

[976] Ross, 'Historical Consciousness,' p.913: "By moving ever westward, Americans could expand their empire in the cause of liberty and perpetually renew their virtue. They could relegate history to the past while they acted out their destiny in the realm of nature. They could develop in space rather than in time". Martin Öhman, 'Perfecting Independence: Tench Coxe and the Political Economy of Western Development,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 31 (Autumn, 2011), pp.397-433.

[977] David Ramsay to Benjamin Rush (February 1788), cited in Hoffer, *Revolution*, p.44.

[978] "Through the Louisiana Purchase of 1803," writes Drew McCoy, "Jefferson appeared to eliminate this problem [of the degradation of virtue] for generations, if not for centuries, to come": *The Elusive Republic*, p.187; Jon Kukla, *A Wilderness So Immense: The Louisiana Purchase and the Destiny of America* (New York, NY., Knopf, 2003).

[979] Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, pp.541-42; In Book 3 of his *Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli, whom Jefferson had studied, demonstrated how Republics that possessed "longer life" were those that "by means of their orders can often be renewed," but which would "not last if they do not renew themselves"; perhaps more importantly, the "mode of renewing them" was by leading "them back toward their beginnings": Harvey Mansfield and Nathan Tarcov, eds., (Chicago, IL., University of Chicago Press, 1996), p.209.

[980] Interestingly, Hannah Spahn, in her exhaustive study of Jefferson's temporal perception, makes only one glancing reference to the Louisiana Purchase: *Jefferson, Time and History*, p.183; see: Roger G. Kennedy, *Mr Jefferson's Lost Cause: Land, Farmers, Slavery and the Louisiana Purchase* (Oxford, OUP, 2003).

The capstone of this "spatial policy" was the Louisiana Purchase of 1803. Jefferson acquired the vast territory, approximately 827,987 square miles that ran from the Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers to the Rocky Mountains, and the Gulf of Mexico to Canada, from Napoleon at the fire-sale price of fifteen million dollars – or two cents per acre. As he declared in his first inaugural address, America was in possession of "a chosen country," a nation "with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation." Room enough, in fact, for America to evade the degradations of time. The addition of a territory as "extensive" and "fertile" as Louisiana, "by enlarging the empire of liberty," would "multiply its auxiliaries, & provide new sources of renovation, should its principles at any time degenerate in those portions of our country which gave them birth."[981] The Republic would remain agricultural, even primitive in its historical and civilizational bias, constantly eluding the iniquities of luxury and commerce in its advance west. In Louisiana, America had found a source of "renovation," a means of returning to that pristine state of virtue that, during the Revolution, had marked "those portions" of the nation "which gave them birth," and which, as Jefferson believed, had begun to "degenerate."

The purchase of the Louisiana territories was thus conceived as a means of governing the historical time of the American Republic. In January 1803, the *New York Evening Post* offered a full-throated defence of the prospective land deal: "*It* belongs of *right* to the United States to regulate the future destiny of *North America*. The country is *ours*; ours is the right to its rivers and all the sources of future opulence, power and happiness."[982] Federalists, by contrast, counselled against the purchase. "By adding an unmeasured world beyond that river," sighed Fisher Ames, "we rush like a comet into infinite space," a space bare but for "wolves and wandering Indians," which would further destabilise the already ungovernable tracts of territory.[983] For Hamilton, such explosive expansion meant that the United States would rapidly acquire "all the injuries of a too widely dispersed population," leading eventually to the "dissolution of the Government." In a prefiguration of what John L. Sullivan would immortally term "Manifest Destiny," Hamilton characterised the cession of Louisiana as presenting America with a "*manifest and great danger*."[984] Far from imbuing the federal

[981] Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin Chambers (28 December, 1805), in: Merrill D. Peterson, *Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography* (New York, NY., 1970), p.773.
[982] Betty Houchin Winfield, 'Public Perception and Public Events: The Louisiana Purchase and the American Partisan Press,' in Peter J. Kastor, ed., *The Louisiana Purchase: Emergence of an American Nation* (Washington DC, CQ Press, 2002), pp.38-50, here: p.42.
[983] Fisher Ames, *Works of Fisher Ames*, I, p.324; Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, p.369.
[984] Alexander Hamilton, *New York Evening Post* (8 February, 1803), in Henry Cabot Lodge, ed., *The Works of Alexander Hamilton* (12 vols., New York, NY., Haskell House, 1971), IV, p.334; Hamilton further remarked that the purchase "threatens the early dismemberment of a large portion of the country; more immediately, the safety of all the Southern States; and more remotely, the independence of the whole Union," ibid, p.334; on the temporality of manifest destiny, see: Allen, *Republic in Time*, pp.25-36; Frederick Merk, Lois Bannister Merk, *Manifest Destiny and Mission in American History: A Reinterpretation* (Cambridge, MA., Harvard University Press, 1963), pp.24-60; Stephanie Lamenager, *Manifest and Other Destinies: Territorial Fictions of the Nineteenth-Century*

government with the administrative or infrastructural means of governing futurity, it deferred to the future the task of tackling contingency.[985] If the renewal of republican virtues demanded a constant movement across unchartered territory, leading America forward in space but back in time, and towards its revolutionary origins, then the essence of those origins – the prospect of both revolutionary upheaval and the "dissolution" of constituted authority – would remain constant, too.[986] "*Manifest danger*," unlike Manifest Destiny, was a temporal epiphenomenon of the American Revolution, one that would be exacerbated, not ameliorated, in space.

Jefferson had hoped that slave emancipation, leading eventually to abolition, would happen "in the order of events," and "with the consent of the masters, rather than by their extirpation."[987] His policy with respect Louisiana, however, demanded that "the order of events" be scrambled, that the historical space separating the virtuous present of America from its classical-republican fate be stretched across the physical space of the expanding Republic.[988] In combination, there emerged an obvious tension: the institution of slavery, far from being ameliorated over time, was left unresolved, left to expand over space. As Hannah Spahn has shown, Jefferson's writings during the 1790s were replete with predictions of imminent race war, but by the early-nineteenth century his arguments for "a gradualist reform receded into a more and more remote future."[989] In a letter to St George Tucker, the Bermuda-born emancipationist, Jefferson had located the time pressures of slavery – and the probable consequences of its delay – in an entangled geopolitical context.[990] The "first chapter of this history," he observed, had already "begun in St. Domingo," where, in 1797, the French colony erupted into revolution following a bloody slave insurrection. The "sooner we put

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United States (Lincoln, NE., University of Nebraska Press, 2004); on Sullivan himself, see: Julius W. Pratt, 'John O'Sullivan and Manifest Destiny,' *New York History* 14 (3, July 1933), pp.213-34.

[985] On Jeffersonian conceptions of national futurity, see Brian Steele, *Thomas Jefferson and American Nationhood* (Cambridge, CUP, 2012), pp.18-52; on Hamiltonian fears for spatial expansion, see: Andrew Shankman, '"A New Thing on Earth": Alexander Hamilton, Pro-Manufacturing Republicans, and the Democratization of American Political Economy,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (Autumn, 2003), pp.323-52, and 'Hamilton on the Louisiana Purchase: A Newly Identified Editorial from the *New-York Evening Post*,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 12: Alexander Hamilton: 1755-1804 (2, April 1955), pp.268-281.

[986] Peter Onuf writes that many Republicans, unlike the Federalists, were elated by this prospect, including Jefferson, whose "vision of westward expansion projected that glorious struggle into the future and across the continent. It was a kind of permanent revolution, re-enacting the nation's beginnings in the multiplication of new, self-governing republican states": 'The Revolution of 1803,' *Wilson Quarterly* (Winter, 2003), pp.22-29, here: p.29; James R. Sofka, 'Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of World Politics,' in Kastor, ed., *The Louisiana Purchase*, pp.51-63.

[987] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State Virginia*, ed. William Peden (Chapel Hill, NC., University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p.163.

[988] By the 1850s this policy had seemingly recreated the sense of historical boredom that Jefferson once associated with colonial America: William Kingsford, *Impressions of the West and South during a six weeks' holiday* (A.H. Armour & Co., Toronto, 1858), observed "a painful monotony" amidst southern life, p.48.

[989] Spahn, *Jefferson, Time and History*, p.13.

[990] On Jefferson and Haitian Revolution, see: Donald R. Hickey, 'America's Response to the Slave Revolt in Haiti,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 2 (4, Winter 1982), pp.361-79; Robin Blackburn, 'Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of the Democratic Revolution,' *The William and Mary Quarterly* 63 (4, October 2006), pp.643-74; Tim Matthewson, *A Proslavery Foreign Policy: Haitian-American Relations during the Early Republic* (Westport, CT., Prager, 2003).

some plan under way" for emancipation, Jefferson wrote, "the greater hope" there was that it would "proceed peaceably" to its "ultimate effect." In an arresting prognostication of the probable consequences of delay, Jefferson stated bluntly: "If something is not done, and soon done, we shall be the murderers of our own children." Slavery perverted generational sovereignty; it devoured the future of the United States because it bequeathed the descendants of the Revolution civil turmoil. Events across the Caribbean, meanwhile, contributed towards the temporalisation of the slave question, especially if America remained an Atlantic-facing commercial entity.[991] Given "the present state of things," Jefferson panted, the "day which begins our combustion must be near at hand, and only a single spark is wanting to make that day tomorrow."[992] In the two decades that followed the purchase of Louisiana, the imminence of "combustion" appeared to fade: American space had reset the timer, "diffusing" the problem of slavery and transforming its abolition into a "peaceably" gradual process. "Time," Jefferson could contentedly remark in 1826, "which outlives all things, will outlive this evil also."[993]

The time bomb carried on ticking, accumulating more explosive material as slavery spread across the mid-west. In believing that the two major political quandaries of the American Republic – the temporality of virtue and the moral horror of slavery – could be resolved by recourse to a single remedy – spatial expansion – Jefferson had mistaken a cure for mere palliative treatment. The notion that the institution of slavery would undergo diffusion, then decline and eventually disappear as it spread through American space proved delusory.[994] Instead, an engorged stream of slaves flooded over the frontier, into the Mississippi River Valley and the Red River Valley of Arkansas. The institution steadily solidified. The wealth and, ultimately, the entire political culture that slavery spawned in these territories produced a geography of divergent "sentiments" and "interests," which hardened over time. By believing that his "spatial policy" and a "gradualist reform" of slavery

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[991] Laurent Dubois, 'The Haitian Revolution and the Sale of Louisiana; or, Thomas Jefferson's (Unpaid) Debt to Jean-Jacques Dessalines,' in Peter J. Kastor, ed., *Empires of the Imagination: Transatlantic Histories of the Louisiana Purchase* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia, 2009), pp.93-117; Arthur Scherr, *Thomas Jefferson's Haitian Policy: Myths and Realities* (Lanham, MD., Lexington Books, 2011).

[992] Thomas Jefferson to St. George Tucker (28 August, 1797), in Oberg, ed., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, XXIX, pp.519-20.

[993] Thomas Jefferson to James Heaton (20 May, 1826); in reality, it was space and not time that was meant to diminish the power of the institution; Peter S. Onuf, 'Domesticating a Captive Nation: Thomas Jefferson and the Problem of Slavery,' in John Milton Cooper Jr., Thomas J. Knock, eds., *Jefferson, Lincoln, and Wilson: The American Dilemma of Race and Democracy* (Charlottesville, VA., University of Virginia Press, 2010), pp.34-60.

[994] Between 1790 and 1810, the slave population of Kentucky, for example, grew at a faster rate than the white population; the number of white inhabitants rose by 194 percent in the last decade of the eighteenth century, whilst slave numbers increase by 241 percent: William L. Miller, 'A Note on the Importance of the Interstate Slave Trade of the Ante Bellum South,' *Journal of Political Economy* 73 (2, April 1965), pp.181-87, see: p.182; on the immediate pre-Civil War period, see: Richard C. Sutch, 'The Breeding of Slaves for Sale and the Westward Expansion of Slavery, 1850-60,' in Stanley L. Engerman, Eugene D. Genovese, eds., *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies* (Princeton, NJ., Princeton University Press, 1975), pp.173-210; John Craig Hammond, '"They are very much interested in obtaining an unlimited slavery": Rethinking the Expansion of Slavery in the Louisiana Purchase Territories, 1803-1805,' *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (3, Autumn 2003), pp.353-80.

could co-exist, Jefferson had implanted a time bomb at the core of the United States.[995] The history of ante-bellum America may be characterized as a series of controlled explosions – the Missouri Crisis of 1819; the Compromise of 1850 – that lead, eventually and bloodily, to a final detonation.[996]

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Following defeat at Leipzig in 1813, the Napoleonic Empire went into free-fall. As Anne-Jean Savary, the duc de Rovigo, observed, "confidence disappeared: the future no longer afforded the prospect of consolation, and men's minds were filled with all sorts of conjectures respecting the changes which it was foreseen must take place in consequence of the inability to prevent them." As the institutions of the Empire crumbled, Napoleon was obliged to offer his (first) abdication at Fontainebleau, on 11 April 1814. History rapidly re-entered an aleatory state. "Time," the duc de Rovigo observed, "was once again flying fast."[997] Although many of the practices and institutions of historical time control devised during the Consulate and Empire were intended to outlive Napoleon, the reemergence of chance after 1812 invalidated the experiences garnered during the meantime of the regime. The same may have be so of the constitutional settlement supervised by Washington if America had not subsequently embraced expansion through space rather than the continued attempt to regulate political time. Fisher Ames summoned up similar doubts about the integrity of the United States when, in 1805, he observed how the Jeffersonian platform of entrusting the future of American liberty to its expanding territorial scope deferred, but did not address, the divergent temporalities of the Republic. "[W]e have all the time floated, with a fearless and unregarded course, down the stream of events, till we are now visibly drawn within the revolutionary suction of a Niagara, and every thing that is liberty will be dashed to pieces in the descent."[998]

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[995] This idea of the "time bomb" is briefly used as a literary device, but not as a means of examining the qualities of American temporality and slavery, by William Freehling, 'The Louisiana Purchase and the Coming of the Civil War,' in Sanford Levinson and Bartholomew H. Sparrow, eds., *The Louisiana Purchase and American Expansion, 1803-1898* (New York, NY., Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005), pp.69-82, see: p.74.

[996] On time and the American Civil War, see: Cheryl A. Wells, *Civil War Time: Temporality and Identity, 1861-1865* (Athens, GA., University of Georgia Press, 2005).

[997] Anne-Jean Savary, duc de Rovigo, *Memoirs of the Duke of Rovigo, M. Savary, written by himself and illustrative of the History of the Emperor Napoleon* (4 vols., London, Henry Colburn, 1828), III, p.132; Karen Hagemann, '"Unimaginable Horror and Misery": The Battle of Leipzig in October 1813 in Civilian Experience and Perception,' in Alan Forrest, Karen Hagemann, Jane Rendall, eds., *Soldiers, Citizens and Civilians: Experiences and Perceptions of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1790-1820* (Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp.157-180; on the military dimensions of imperial disintegration before Napoleon's first abdication, see, *passim*, Jacques-Olivier Boudon, *Napoléon et la champagne de France: 1814* (Paris, Armand Colin, 2014).

[998] Fisher Ames, *The Works of Fisher Ames* (Boston, MA., T. B. Wait, 1809), p.380.

CONCLUSION: The resumption of "ordinary history"?

"I conclude my work with the year 1815, because everything that came after that belongs to ordinary history."[999] From his eminence as the foreign minister of the Austrian Empire, Klemens von Metternich looked back upon more three decades of political chaos. In retrospect, he was amazed that he had managed to "withstand the storms of time," when so many of his generation had been swept away by the "whirlwind" of war of revolution. A witness to the "overthrow of centuries of ancient institutions," Metternich had watched France, in ten years, exchange fourteen centuries of French kingship for the transient Jacobin Republic; he had been present when, in 1806, Napoleon dismantled a millennium of dynastic tradition by declaring the Holy Roman Empire defunct. In late 1815, however, as the erstwhile French Emperor sailed for St. Helena, exile and obscurity, the dizzying historical experience of the preceding decades seemed to subside. "We have fallen upon a time, when a thousand small calculations and small views on the one side, gross mistake and feeble remedies on the other, form the history of the day."[1000] Historical experience, Metternich contended, had been decelerated, decompressed, detemporalised: it had, to some extent, become "ordinary" again.

The political "eventfulness" of 1816 would swiftly betray such wishful thinking.[1001] These remarks are nevertheless instructive: the revolutionary era was widely considered to have been a time of extraordinary time. The starting point – the deterioration of British imperial authority in the American colonies in 1774 – and the finish line – the disintegration of the Napoleonic Empire at the Battle of Waterloo in 1815 – demarcate a four-decade-long period of unfathomable change: it represents a transition from one type of time to another; in fact, it represents a change in the nature of change itself. Time became an agent in history, restructuring the pace, pattern, and proportions of historical experience.[1002] The central contention of this thesis is that time, more than merely altering the dynamics and dimensions of history, also became the chief assassin of political legitimacy, complicating and deranging the exercise of political power, ceaseless reproducing the sense of instability that was itself characteristic of revolutionary historical time. Between 1774 and 1815, then, a single process of change in the nature of historical change begins to emerge, one that blends the preceding chapters into a general narrative of time and power.

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[999] Prince Klemens von Metternich, *Memoirs of Prince Metternich, 1773-1835. Volume III: 1815-1829*, Prince Richard Metternich, (ed.), Mrs. Alexander Napier (trans.), 5. vols., London, Richard Bentley & Son, 1880-1882, III, p.338.
[1000] Ibid, I, pp.xii, 243.
[1001] Rhys Jones, '1816 and the resumption of "ordinary history,"' *Journal of Modern European History* 14 (1, 2016), pp.119-44.
[1002] "Time is no longer simply the medium in which all histories take place," observes Koselleck, "it gains a historical quality. Consequently, history no longer occurs in, but through, time. Time becomes a dynamic and historical force in its own right": *Futures Past*, p.236.

The historicity of the ancien regime contributed to its own collapse. A conviction in the essential iterability of history, in which past, present and future operated in structural lock-step – the future inevitably reflecting and reproducing the ontological complexion of the past, the transhistorical validity of present-term experience – produced a time temperament that desensitised the ancien regime to political urgency. The consequent emotional response was ennui, an extreme and often psychologically deleterious form of monotony, which was particularly prevalent at the court of Versailles. By the 1780s, both ennui and the belief that history, supervised and regularised by the traditional, sacral, rhythmic authority of the crown, was incapable of producing unfamiliar experience, were combined to produce a toxic cocktail of complacency. The "temporisations" of the crown, meanwhile, had begun to invest the otherwise ordinary problems of royal finance and authority with increasingly epic historical consequences. It was the time pressures of fiscal crisis that forced the convocation of the Estates-General, an archaic institution that, despite its historic pedigree, proved wholly incapable of coordinating the unforeseen events that began to defamiliarise the pre-existing patterns of historical experience. By the midsummer of 1789, the past and future began drifting apart at a bewildering rate.

In the American colonies, the notion of a "monotonous" course of history was expressed as a form of temporal elongation in which the prognosticated processes of historical change unfurled across centuries. The acceleration of the imperial crisis after 1774, and the convocation of the Continental Congress, foreshortened – "abbreviated" – the space of historical experience. Unlike in pre-revolutionary France, however, the Koselleckian categories of the "space of experience" and the "horizon of expectation" did not drift apart; they began rushing together, contorting the deliberative space of the present and creating a crushing sense of temporal claustrophobia. The emergence of historical time during the American Revolution therefore jostled with pre-existing formulae of historical sequences, largely derived from the classical precedents of civic republicanism, and which gave the shape of future events an ominous hue. It was only after the Declaration of Independence that the "horizon" of history was obscured. Revolutionary deliberative processes were kairotically charge, infesting every aspect of lived experience with an unfamiliar time pressure, in turn transforming time from an absolute or constant conceptual presence into an historical actor in its own right.[1003]

After the initial time tear of revolution, rupture became a constitutive, even commonplace element of the lived experience of history. Political power during the revolutionary era, under the Articles of Confederation and during the pre-Thermidor period,

[1003] This idea of time as historical agent is discussed in depth by Sanja Perovic with respect the Thermidorian Reaction of 1794-95, in: *The Calendar*, p.180-82.

was temporally experimental. The practice of power became indistinguishable from the manipulation of time: neither could be stabilised. The onset of revolution had thrown the interdependent experiential spheres of past, present, and future into a state of relative flux; they remained inextricably bound together, of course, but in fungible, changeable, and non-linear forms. Koselleck contended that the late-eighteenth century was the gestation period of modernity, which birthed "*Neuzeit*" – new time. It is perhaps more accurate, at least in the immediate context of American and French Revolutionary events, to speak of *Neue Zeiten*, new times.[1004] In France, the perceived absence of total historical rupture created the conditions for political radicalisation as Parisian sans-culottes and Jacobin agitators began to reconceptualise time as duration, as a continuous flow of events inimical to the present-term exercise of liberty. Consequently, revolutionaries did not embrace historical acceleration, but a far more extreme form of progress – historical instantaneity, in effect – that invested the people, and their spontaneous demonstration of sovereignty, as a force of such awesome constituent power that it was capable of warping time and history. As the overthrow of monarchy dragged centuries of traditional experiences and sources of legitimate authority into the void, the recently warped linearity of history jettisoned the Republic into a timeless future. The legitimacy of revolutionary power, however, remained coefficient to its historical movement: speed thus became the default setting of political authority, and the attempt to institutionalise historical velocity during the Terror ultimately proved unsustainably self-destructive. In America, by contrast, the ontological disjuncture of past, present and future, produced a liquefaction of historical experience. Political control appeared to "slide," as Washington observed, over a temporal plane that was constantly disrupted by the multiplication of potential futures, yet unable to gain traction for long enough – like a "pedestal of ice on a summers day" – to acquire any sense of historical trajectory.

The promise of progress was collapsed into an era of political exhaustion. Under the Directory and prior to the Constitutional Convention, any sense of historical direction morphed into a ceaseless sense of historical happening. Contingency consequently saturated every aspect of revolutionary society; the American and French Republics appeared as if at the edge of an "abyss" or perched perilously on a "pivet": the dominant emotional response was anxiety, which fostered a foreboding of the future and produced paralysis in the present. The participants to the Convention and the coup of Brumaire instrumentalised this anxiety-ridden form of historical experience as a means of justifying their quasi-legal take-overs. Pre-existing constitutional arrangements had invalidated themselves on account of their inability to regulate – and, in some cases, having institutionalised – temporal instability. Both were

[1004] Once again, this thesis considers entangled processes, the way in which the experience of historical change changed, and not the varying similitude of comparative events; see: Koselleck, 'Neuzeit: Remarks on the Semantics of Modern Concepts of Movement,' in *Futures Past*, pp.245-54.

designed to reinvigorate the exercise of political power by creating new regimes – new institutions and practices of power – that could create political duration, investing contemporaries with the time to gather experience, and thereby detemporalise the experience of history. The revolutions were declared to be over.

Contingency had robbed contemporaries of their capacity to coordinate themselves historically; indeed, by 1787 and 1799 historical meaning had seemingly been dissolved into a regime of pure chance. Even after the Convention and Brumaire, recently devised institutions repeatedly buckled under the pressure of a temporalised form of historical randomness that, during the early 1790s and 1800s, threatened to abbreviate the "space of experience" and destabilise political power in the face of an obscured "horizon of expectation." There were also structural affinities between the temporalities of post-revolutionary America and France As the primary protagonists in the post-revolutionary regimes, George Washington and Napoleon Bonaparte could sustain their own authority, and by implication the authority of government, by deploying their own charismatic capacity to act as shock-absorbers. In short, they set about creating meantime, an immediate-term form of political duration, which enabled American and French society to "gain time" in the present, to incubate historical experience, and thereby fortify political and institutional capacities for confronting the rapid onset of the unforeseen, the contingent, the random.

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